

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate Puyallup South Hill as a regional growth center until December 2028. The city may either:

- Complete the process for designation as a countywide center, or
- Demonstrate the center meets regional criteria, including planned frequent or high-capacity transit. To complete this, the city would need to share a preliminary draft with PSRC for discussion and submit final documentation for PSRC board approval.

This condition allows the city additional time to meet the regional designation criteria or to complete the designation process to become a countywide center. The center serves as an important countywide destination for retail, services, education and other employment uses.

Background








The South Hill regional growth center is the heart of Puyallup’s South Hill neighborhood. The center is located just to the east of SR-512, a limited-access freeway that connects the center with downtown Puyallup to the north and Tacoma and I-5 to the west. Major development in the South Hill regional growth center includes the South Hill Mall, auto-oriented retail businesses, Pierce College, the South Hill Business & Technology Center, and a mix of single and multifamily residential development.

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 Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center’s current density is 11 people per acre, which does not meet the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre		The Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center’s planned density is 28 people per acre, which does not meet 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		51% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center is currently 845 acres, which exceeds the regional standard.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing bus service to serve the community but does not meet frequency standards, and the area is not planned for high-capacity transit.

Criteria		Status
Market Potential: Demonstrated capacity to support growth targets	—	A market study was required and has been completed by the city. The market study is available online . Since 2010, the center has increased density by 2 people per acre.
Center Subarea Plan	—	The center subarea plan was last certified in 2020.

Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

A. Memorandum – City of Puyallup



February 4, 2026

To: Growth Management Policy Board, Puget Sound Regional Council

From: Puyallup City Council

Subject: Request to Maintain South Hill Regional Growth Center Designation with Conditions

Dear Chair and Members of the Growth Management Policy Board,

The Puyallup City Council respectfully requests that PSRC maintain the South Hill designation as a Regional Growth Center (RGC) subject to conditions and a defined two-year work program.

While we recognize South Hill does not currently meet every metric in the Regional Centers Framework, we were surprised to learn that the recommendation is redesignation rather than an opportunity to complete additional planning work. We were informed of this recommendation on December 18, 2025, and since that time have worked collaboratively with PSRC and our partner agencies to address the gap between where we are today and the identified criteria.

In PSRC's 2020 certification report, the City was advised to address specific items by 2025, including completing a market analysis and considering a boundary adjustment. In response, the City completed a comprehensive 2024 Market Analysis and advanced significant zoning and policy work through our Comprehensive Plan update. The primary recommendation not pursued at that time was a boundary reduction.

We understood there were issues to address through our Comp Plan update. What we did not anticipate was that not implementing the boundary adjustment—along with current transit service levels—would result in a recommendation to remove the RGC designation rather than allow time to complete the remaining work.

We also note that other centers, including Federal Way, Silverdale, and Issaquah, are currently below required thresholds yet are scheduled for re-review in 2028 to demonstrate progress and investment. We respectfully request the same opportunity for South Hill.

The enclosed staff letter outlines a clear, measurable, and time-bound plan that will bring South Hill into full compliance within two years through:

- A boundary adjustment to remove public facility parcels and open space to increase activity unit density;
- Partnership to improve transit frequency and regional connectivity;
- Targeted zoning and incentive strategies to accelerate redevelopment and density;
- An update to the South Hill Subarea Plan by December 2027.



South Hill is an active regional destination anchored by Pierce College, South Hill Mall, the South Hill Business & Technology Center, hotels, entertainment venues, new multifamily and senior housing, a new police headquarters, and ongoing private investment supported by strong market performance. It

serves as a true regional destination drawing visitors, employees, students, and customers from across Pierce County and beyond. The City has demonstrated its commitment through planning, infrastructure, and long-term public investment. We are prepared to complete the remaining steps needed to align technical criteria with the growth and investment already occurring.

Had we understood this was the likely trajectory, we would have prioritized these steps sooner. We are ready to do so now.

We respectfully and graciously request that the Board allow South Hill the same two-year window afforded to other centers to demonstrate activity, investment, and compliance while maintaining its Regional Growth Center designation.

We value our partnership with PSRC and look forward to working collaboratively to ensure South Hill continues to fulfill its regional role consistent with VISION 2050.

Sincerely,

Ned Witting
Mayor

Dean Johnson
Deputy Mayor

Lauren Adler
District 1

Jim Kastama
District 1

Dennis King
District 2

Lindsay Smolko
District 3

Renne Gilliam
At Large



City of Puyallup

Development & Permitting Services

333 S Meridian | Puyallup, WA 98371

P: (253) 435-3604 | E: kbaker@puyallupwa.gov

To: PSRC, Growth Management Policy Board
From: City of Puyallup, Development and Permitting Services Department
Subject: **Request to Maintain Regional Growth Center Designation for Puyallup South Hill**
Date: February 4, 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Puyallup respectfully requests that the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) maintain the Regional Growth Center designation for the Puyallup South Hill RGC, subject to appropriate conditions. While we acknowledge that the center does not currently meet all criteria outlined in the Regional Centers Framework, we have demonstrated substantial compliance, significant market potential, and a clear pathway to achieving regional density standards through continued planning and investment.

BACKGROUND

Regional Growth Center History

The South Hill Regional Growth Center has been designated as a regional center since its establishment, serving as an important regional destination for retail, services, employment, and education. The 845-acre center is strategically located along the SR-512 corridor, providing regional connectivity between downtown Puyallup, Tacoma, and I-5.

Significant planning efforts date back to the mid-2000s, with the adoption of a policy framework in 2009. However, the full sub-area plan for the South Hill RGC was not adopted until 2017, with significant zoning changes being adopted concurrently. Long-term investment has been made through the Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) grants established in 2008. Private and public investment has continued to increase in the growth center over recent years, even during a global pandemic, and the city's Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) incentive program was expanded to the South Hill RGC in 2023.

CASE FOR REGIONAL DESIGNATION

Compliance with Regional Centers Framework

Areas of Full Compliance (4 of 7 criteria):

- 1. Mix of Uses:** More than half (56% or 571 acres) of the center is zoned for business, commercial, residential, or mixed use, demonstrating strong mixed-use character with 51% planned residential growth balanced by employment uses.
- 2. Market Potential:** The 2024 Market Analysis demonstrates substantial market potential. The center has sufficient zoned capacity to achieve 47.3 activity units per acre across the entire center when considering both developable and developed parcels. This potential is likely even higher following the City's land use redesignation work completed as part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update.
- 3. Regional Role:** The center serves as an important countywide and regional destination, drawing customers and employees from across Pierce County and beyond. Major employers and institutions demonstrate a regional draw and economic significance.

- 4. Location:** The center is located entirely within City of Puyallup boundaries with strong freeway connectivity via SR-512.

Areas Requiring Attention:

- 1. Existing Density (10.3 AU/acre vs. 18 required):** While current density falls short, PSRC's 2021 guidance indicates that non-compliance with existing density will not result in loss of designation if the city continues to actively plan for required density levels. Our comprehensive plan update and market analysis fulfill this requirement. Additionally, the City is willing to pursue a boundary adjustment that could result in an increase of existing density ranging from 14 to 26 AU/acre¹.
- 2. Size (845 acres vs. 640 maximum):** We commit to pursuing a boundary adjustment to remove approximately 279 acres of primarily Public Facilities and Limited Manufacturing zoned parcels (e.g., Bradley Lake Park, City Corporate Yards, a self-storage facility, Air Products Manufacturing Corporation, and Pierce College) from the designated center, reducing the total to 566 acres. This adjustment maintains center contiguity while preserving nearly all land with residential and employment growth potential and results in an existing density of nearly 14 AU/acre.
- 3. Transit Access:** The center is served by multiple Pierce Transit bus routes including routes 4, 400, and 402, though at this time service frequency ranges from every 30-60 minutes. The city is in communication with Pierce Transit, and both agencies are committed to finding a solution for increased transit frequency to serve the South Hill regional growth center.

Regional Economic Significance and Growth Potential

The 2024 Market Analysis by Community Attributes Inc. demonstrates compelling evidence of market potential:

Employment and Market Performance:

- **Current employment:** 5,918 jobs (highest of all Puyallup study areas) with forecast growth of 7,185 additional jobs by 2044
- **Retail Hub:** South Hill Mall and surrounding retail generate over \$470 million in annual sales, drawing customers from throughout Pierce County and beyond
- **Technology Corridor:** Centeris data center operations serve national and international clients, with transpacific connectivity positioning the center as a hub for technology infrastructure
- **Educational Services:** Pierce College serves thousands of students from across the region in workforce development programs
- **Strategic Location:** Direct SR-512 freeway access providing regional connectivity between I-5 corridor and east Pierce County, with proximity to Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Development Capacity and Market Strength:

- Net developable capacity for 7,886 new residents (3,105 housing units) and 7,185 jobs by 2044
- Sufficient capacity exists to accommodate adopted growth targets
- Retail lease rates increased to a 17-year high of nearly \$29/SF in 2023
- 241,600 SF of multifamily space delivered in 2019, demonstrating recent development activity
- Washington State's recent data center tax exemption legislation enhances competitiveness for technology tenants

Recent Investment

The South Hill center has experienced significant public and private investment since 2017, demonstrating continued market confidence:

Major Commercial Developments:

- **Benaroya Company:** Substantial investments in the 86-acre South Hill Business & Technology Center, including:
 - Centeris SHI data center offering power-ready capacity with sustainable power and high-speed connectivity through the Transpacific Hub, and
 - Over 104,000 SF of first-generation Class A office space with brand-new infrastructure
- **Public Safety building:** The city invested in the South Hill Business and Technology Center with a 30-year commercial lease for a new 54,000 square foot police headquarters
- **Homewood Suites Hotel:** 5-story, 108-room hotel at the South Hill Mall property
- **Central Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 72:** New 18,000 square foot fire station building
- **Pierce College Campus:** 54,000 square foot Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) building within the existing campus
- **30th & Meridian MOB #4:** 24,484 square foot medical office building on an existing medical office complex
- **Deer Ridge Memory Care:** 72-bed memory care facility

Residential Development:

- **Bradley Heights Apartments:** 236-unit multi-family residential project
- **Wesley Homes:** A senior housing complex consisting of 114 independent living units, a 36-unit care center, and a 75,000 square foot assisted living facility
- **Affinity:** 168-unit independent senior living project

Pipeline Projects:

- **Dos Lagos:** 143-unit multi-family residential development across multiple properties
- **43rd Ave Multi-Family:** 41-unit multi-family residential development
- **Willows Pond:** A 30-unit multi-family residential development.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

The city has taken notable steps over the past ten years to address areas where it does not fully meet the regional centers framework criteria. These steps include a commitment to long-term investment through the LIFT grant, adoption of substantial zoning changes and development incentives, and an updated market analysis. These actions demonstrate that the Puyallup-South Hill Regional Growth Center meets or is actively working towards meeting the framework criteria and warrants maintaining its regional center status through conditional redesignation.

The City of Puyallup proposes the following conditions to maintain regional center designation:

1. Boundary Adjustment (Timeline: 2026)

Remove 279 acres of primarily Public Facilities and Limited Manufacturing zoning from the designated center boundary, reducing total area to 566 acres while maintaining contiguity and preserving growth capacity. The city is also willing to explore additional options for a modified growth center boundary.

2. Transit Service Enhancement (Timeline: 2026-2027)

Work with Pierce Transit to:

- Explore implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line connecting South Hill with either the Puyallup Downtown RGC or the Lakewood RGC
- Establish frequent service standards on existing key routes within the center

3. Zoning Improvement Strategy (Timeline: 2026-2027)

Develop and implement strategies to increase activity unit density through:

- Increasing density and removing zoning barriers, such as height bonuses (currently underway)
- Incentive programs to catalyze redevelopment of underutilized parcels, such as modification of the expanded MFTE program
- Updating applicable design standards to address multi-family open space requirements and through-block connections to improve pedestrian access (currently underway)
- Periodic monitoring and reporting on density achievement progress

4. Subarea Plan Update (Timeline: By December 31, 2027)

Update the South Hill Neighborhood Plan to:

- Address modified center boundary
- Incorporate mode-split goal
- Include specific implementation strategies for achieving 45 AU/acre planned target density

CONSEQUENCES OF DOWNGRADE

Redesignating South Hill to countywide status would:

1. **Reduce Regional Funding Access:** Limit eligibility for regional transportation and infrastructure funding
2. **Discourage Investment:** Signal reduced priority status to private investors and developers
3. **Undermine Planning Efforts:** Contradict years of planning and investment in the center's regional role
4. **Limit Regional Coordination:** Reduce opportunities for multi-jurisdictional planning and transit coordination
5. **Conflict with Market Reality:** Ignore demonstrable regional market served by center anchors

RECOMMENDATION

The City of Puyallup respectfully requests that the PSRC Growth Management Policy Board redesignate the Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center as a Regional Growth Center with conditions as outlined in this report. The center demonstrates substantial compliance with regional criteria, clear market potential, significant regional role, and strong local commitment to achieving full compliance through the proposed conditions.

This approach:

- Aligns with PSRC precedent for conditional redesignation
- Recognizes the center's demonstrated regional significance
- Provides a clear pathway to full criteria compliance
- Supports VISION 2050 objectives for concentrated growth

- Maintains momentum from substantial planning investments

With City-controlled plan modifications, we believe that we will meet six out of the seven criteria, which is in line with other agencies that have received recommendations for conditional or full approval. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with PSRC staff to finalize appropriate conditions and demonstrate continued progress toward achieving regional density standards while maintaining the South Hill center's vital regional role.

¹ We were unable to replicate the PSRC calculations for existing density and were not able to confirm the methodology used within the allotted time to respond. This will need to be explored further if conditionally certified.

Attachments:

- [2024 Market Analysis](#) (Community Attributes Inc.)
- Letters of Support from Regional Stakeholders (Pierce Transit, Benaroya Company, Cafaro Company)
- Map of Potential Boundary Adjustment (City)
- 2020 South Hill Certification Report (PSRC)



February 4, 2026

Puget Sound Regional Council
Growth Management Policy Board
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Support for Maintaining Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center Designation

Dear Members of the Growth Management Policy Board:

Pierce Transit writes in strong support of maintaining the Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center's designation as a regional center within the Puget Sound Regional Council's Centers Framework.

The South Hill center's location along the SR-512 corridor and its connectivity to regional transportation networks position it as a natural hub for regional transit service. Pierce Transit recognizes the importance of this center for regional mobility and is committed to exploring options to provide frequent service, including 15-minute service for up to 16 hours per day, through ongoing transit coordination and strong local transit connections to regional high-capacity transit.

We understand that the center currently faces challenges in meeting all regional center criteria, particularly regarding existing density and transit service frequency. However, we believe these challenges can be addressed through a conditional redesignation approach that maintains regional status while establishing clear benchmarks and timelines for improvement.

The South Hill center's strengths include:

- Strategic location with freeway access serving regional traffic patterns
- Major anchors including South Hill Mall, Pierce College, and the South Hill Business & Technology Center
- Demonstrated market potential with 845 acres of developable land
- Proven growth trajectory with density increases since 2010
- Strong mixed-use character with 51% planned residential growth balanced by employment uses
- Immediate transit connection along SR-161/Meridian and regional connections at the adjacent Puyallup Transit Center and SR-512 Park and Ride

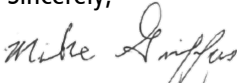
Redesignating this center to countywide status would undermine years of planning efforts, reduce access to regional funding and coordination, and send a discouraging message to stakeholders who have invested in the area's regional role.



We urge the Growth Management Policy Board and PSRC staff to work with the City of Puyallup to establish conditions that maintain the regional center designation while addressing identified gaps. This approach, which PSRC has proposed for other centers facing similar challenges, would better serve regional growth management objectives.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective. We stand ready to support efforts to strengthen the South Hill center's performance and regional contributions.

Sincerely,



Mike Griffus, CEO
Pierce Transit

cc: City of Puyallup via PSRC



South Hill Mall

3500 Meridian Street, Suite #902, Puyallup, WA, 98373

January 28, 2026

Puget Sound Regional Council
Growth Management Policy Board
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Support for Maintaining Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center Designation

Dear Members of the Growth Management Policy Board:

On behalf of the Cafaro Company, owner of South Hill Mall, I write in strong support of maintaining the Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center's designation as a regional center within the Puget Sound Regional Council's Centers Framework.

The South Hill center serves as a critical economic hub for our region, providing significant employment opportunities and retail services that extend well beyond Puyallup's city limits. The South Hill Mall has recently facilitated the development of a new hotel and the repurposing of vacated department stores and continues to engage in discussions to reimagine the future of our regional shopping mall. The regional growth center designation is essential for attracting continued investment and supporting the area's economic vitality.

We understand that the center currently faces challenges in meeting all regional center criteria, particularly regarding existing density and transit service frequency. However, we believe these challenges can be addressed through a conditional redesignation approach that maintains regional status while establishing clear benchmarks and timelines for improvement.

The South Hill center's strengths include:

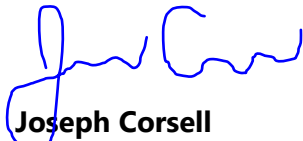
- Strategic location with freeway access serving regional traffic patterns
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- Strong mixed-use character with 51% planned residential growth balanced by employment uses

Redesignating this center to countywide status would undermine years of planning efforts, reduce access to regional funding and coordination, and send a discouraging message to stakeholders who have invested in the area's regional role.

We urge the Growth Management Policy Board and PSRC staff to work with the City of Puyallup to establish conditions that maintain the regional center designation while addressing identified gaps. This approach, which PSRC has proposed for other centers facing similar challenges, would better serve regional growth management objectives.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective. We stand ready to support efforts to strengthen the South Hill center's performance and regional contributions.

Sincerely,



Joseph Corsell

The Cafaro Company

dba: South Hill Mall

(o) 253-840-4349 x-502

(m) 330-719-7526

(e) jcorsell@cafarocompany.com

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Mercer Island, WA 98040-3723
425.440.6700
www.benaroya.com



February 2, 2026

Puget Sound Regional Council
Growth Management Policy Board
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Support for Maintaining Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center Designation

Dear Members of the Growth Management Policy Board:

The Benaroya Company writes in strong support of maintaining the Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center's designation as a regional center within the Puget Sound Regional Council's Centers Framework.

The Benaroya Company has made substantial investments in the South Hill center throughout our 86-acre South Hill Business & Technology Center campus. We have recently completed significant renovations and infrastructure improvements to meet the demands of modern technology tenants, including our Centeris data center operation. Additionally, we pursued redesignated of a portion of the campus to mixed use through the 2044 Comprehensive Plan Update process. The regional center designation is essential for continuing to attract critical technology operations and high-quality employment opportunities to this region.

We understand that the center currently faces challenges in meeting all regional center criteria, particularly regarding existing density and transit service frequency. However, we believe these challenges can be addressed through a conditional redesignation approach that maintains regional status while establishing clear benchmarks and timelines for improvement.

The South Hill center's strengths include:

- Strategic location with freeway access serving regional traffic patterns
- Major anchors including South Hill Mall, Pierce College, and the South Hill Business & Technology Center
- Demonstrated market potential with 845 acres of developable land
- Proven growth trajectory with density increases since 2010
- Strong mixed-use character with 51% planned residential growth balanced by employment uses

Redesignating this center to countywide status would undermine years of planning efforts, reduce access to regional funding and coordination, and send a discouraging message to stakeholders like us who have invested significantly in South Hill's regional role.

We urge the Growth Management Policy Board and PSRC staff to work with the City of Puyallup to establish conditions that maintain the regional center designation while addressing identified gaps. This approach, which PSRC has proposed for other centers facing similar challenges, would better serve regional growth management objectives.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective. We stand ready to support efforts to strengthen the South Hill center's performance and regional contributions.

Sincerely,

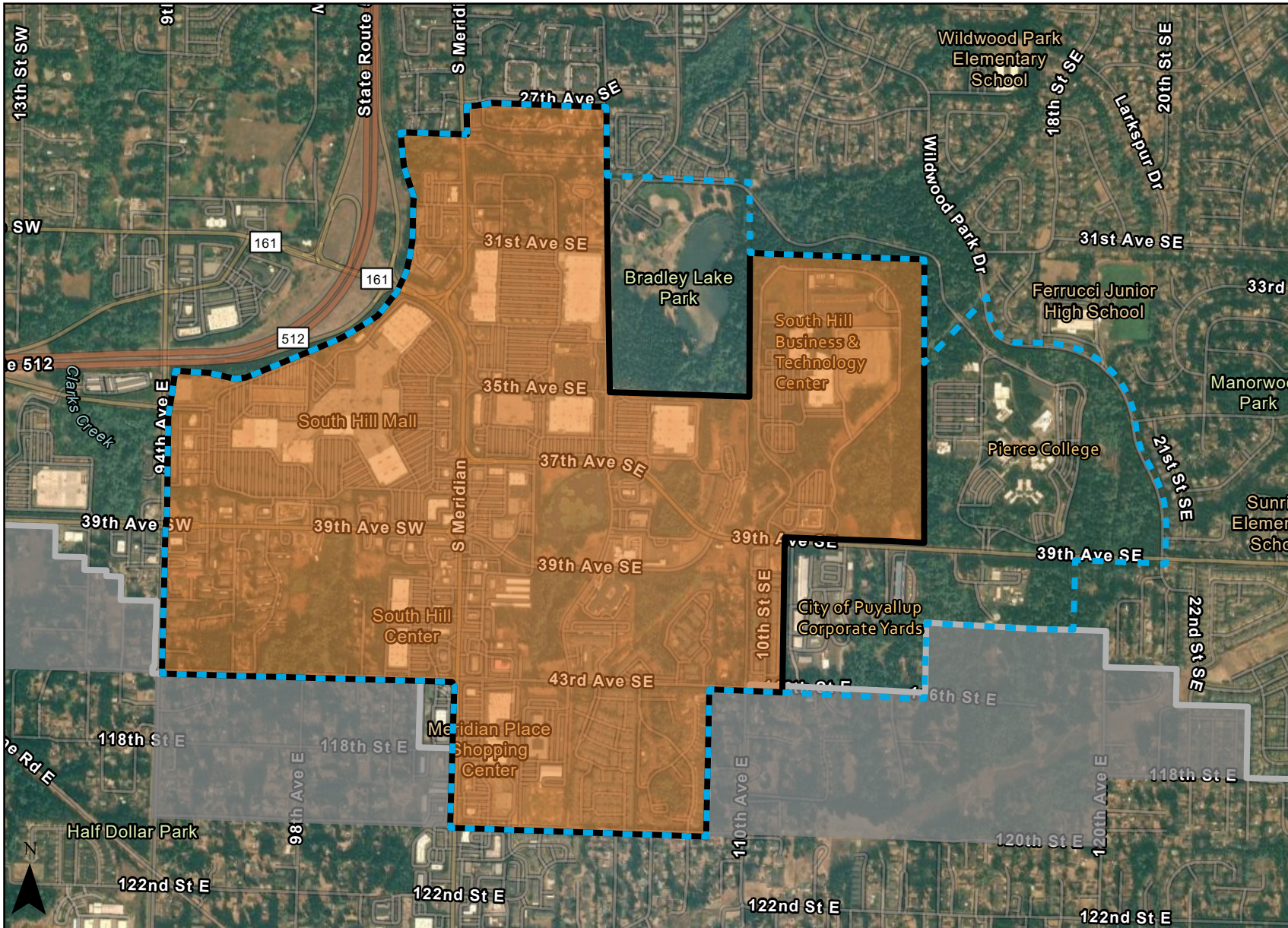
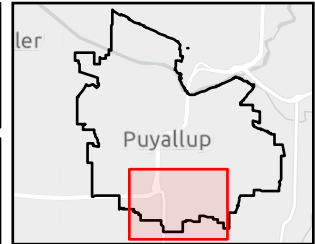
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry R. Benaroya". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Larry" being the most prominent.





Larry R. Benaroya

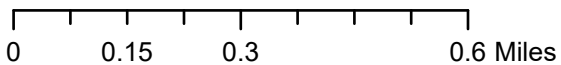
Manager

Benaroya Capital Company, L.L.C.

South Hill Regional Growth Center



-  Existing South Hill RGC
-  Potential RGC Boundary
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Area



Scale: 1:16,066

Map produced by RNBrown.

Date: 2/4/2026

The printed information was derived from digital databases within the City of Puyallup GIS Portal. The City of Puyallup cannot accept responsibility for any errors, omissions, or positional accuracy, and therefore, there are no warranties which accompany this product. Users of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION



PUYALLUP-SOUTH HILL SUBAREA PLAN

September 10, 2020

PUYALLUP – SOUTH HILL

Puyallup-South Hill was designated as a regional growth center by PSRC in 1995. The Puyallup City Council adopted the South Hill Regional Growth Center (RGC) Subarea Plan as an element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2017.

The regional center is located on top of the South Hill bluff above the Puyallup River valley and is centered around the South Hill Mall and other large retailers. The subarea plan anticipates considerable growth in the area over the next decade and includes provisions to transform the center to a more walkable urban form and move away from the auto-centric land use pattern that currently characterizes the area. Planning for the subarea began in 2006, and a vision and land use framework were adopted in 2009. The city completed the subarea plan to address PSRC regional growth center subarea plan requirements and submitted the plan to PSRC. PSRC staff worked with city staff in preparation of this report.

REGIONAL GROWTH CENTERS CERTIFICATION

VISION 2040 includes DP-Action-17 (p. 98) that directs jurisdictions with regional growth centers and/or manufacturing/industrial centers to develop subarea plans for those centers. This expectation has been in place since 2003 and is required for all new regional centers. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and local governments have worked together to develop an overall process for reviewing and certifying that regional center plans are consistent with VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process.¹

In 2018, PSRC adopted the Regional Centers Framework Update. VISION 2050, an update to VISION 2040, is anticipated to be adopted in fall 2020. The Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers in 2025, following local plan updates. All regional growth centers are expected to have subarea plans adopted and updated to be consistent with the Framework and VISION 2050 by that time. Certification of a subarea plan now reaffirms the planning work for the regional growth center is consistent with VISION 2040 and is an opportunity to identify whether any additional planning work is required by 2025.

CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the South Hill Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan, the following action is recommended to the PSRC Growth Management Policy Board, Transportation Policy Board, and Executive Board:

The Puget Sound Regional Council certifies that the Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers.

¹ The specific requirements for center planning are provided in [PSRC’s Plan Review Manual](#), and the process is also described in [VISION 2040, Part IV: Implementation](#). Certification of the jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan for consistency with the regional transportation plan, regionally established guidelines and policies, and Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning is completed through a separate board action.

Review of Regional Growth Center Planning

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the South Hill subarea plan. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and [Regional Center Plans Checklist](#), is listed in high-level bullets. Discussion in each topic area highlights exemplary provisions of the plan, as well as issues identified through the certification review where future work on the part of the city may more fully address VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and center planning requirements. Future work should be considered as jurisdictions update local plans in 2024 to be consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework.

The review contained in this section follows the format and content established in the Regional Center Plans Checklist, covering the seven major categories (center plan concept, environment, land use, housing, economy, public services, and transportation).

Center Concept

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Vision for the center**, including a commitment to compact, pedestrian and transit-oriented development.
- Identification of the area** designated as a regional growth center and relationship to other plans.
- A **market analysis** of the center's development potential.

DISCUSSION:

The South Hill plan effectively addresses the Center Concept requirements.

- ☑ The vision for the South Hill regional center is well-articulated and centered around building a “Complete Community” with measures to create a thriving retail core, compact neighborhoods, and employment and educational opportunities. The vision also emphasizes pedestrian-scale design and multi-modal transportation options.
- ☑ The center is identified in the city's comprehensive plan and its relationship to PSRC's Centers Framework and Pierce County's Countywide Planning Policies is described.
- ☑ The plan includes a market study completed in 2015 that describes the center's existing economic conditions and market potential. The study describes South Hill's economic potential, strong outlook for retail, and its robust market for apartment construction.

Environment

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following environmental policy topics:

- Critical/environmentally sensitive areas**, including inventories and relevant policies and programs.
- Parks and open space**, including public spaces and civic places, and provisions to encourage accessible open space.
- Innovative stormwater management** policies and programs.
- Air pollution and greenhouse gas emission reduction** policies and programs.

DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Environment requirements.

- ☑ The plan prioritizes protection of critical areas in South Hill. Policies are included to promote the use of public rights-of-way for green infrastructure and adopting standards appropriate for development near wetlands. Critical areas are also identified in a map.

- ☑ The plan describes and maps existing parks and open/public spaces and includes numerous policies to create an interconnected system of amenities for people who live, work, and spend time in South Hill.
- ☑ The plan establishes stormwater management as a key area, with policies outlining measures to expand stormwater treatment and detention on sites spread throughout the center.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ A more detailed discussion of existing conditions related to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as policies to reduce them, would support better health outcomes and improve quality of life for people who live and work in South Hill.

Land Use

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for center plans to address the following land use topics:

Defined boundaries and shape for the center that are compact and easily walkable.

Residential and employment growth targets that accommodate a significant share of the jurisdiction’s growth, as well as residential densities and building intensities with capacity to accommodate these levels of growth.

Mix, distribution and location of existing and future land uses described and mapped. Encourage a mix of complementary uses.

Design standards for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development and other transit-supportive planning that orients land uses around transit.

DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Land Use requirements.

- ☑ The plan calls for more than 2,000 new housing units and 2,500 new jobs in South Hill by 2030 – roughly one-third of the city’s overall housing and employment growth.
- ☑ The plan includes a detailed description of existing land uses and future land use designations, which include replacing the current one-size-fits-all zoning with three area-specific mixed-use zoning designations. Future land uses and designations are also mapped.
- ☑ Design standards are carefully considered and oriented to primarily serve pedestrians and encourage denser residential development.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ Centers should range in size from 200 to 640 acres (1 square mile), unless served by an internal high-capacity transit system. The city should consider refinements to the South Hill center boundary to support a compact, walkable center.
- ☐ During the upcoming countywide target setting process, the city should ensure citywide population and employment allocations enable the city to adopt new center growth targets for South Hill that meet minimum planning expectations for regional growth centers (planning for at least 45 activity units/acre).
- ☐ Current data shows that existing activity unit densities are low in the center. During the next centers monitoring review period in 2025, urban regional growth centers with densities below 18 activity units per acre must complete a new market study to evaluate the potential for and opportunities to best support center growth.

Housing

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following housing policy topics:

Existing and targeted housing units.

Tailored provisions for a variety of housing types, affordable housing, and special housing needs.

Implementation strategies for addressing housing targets and goals.

DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Housing requirements.

- Existing and targeted housing units are identified. The center is expected to accommodate a large share of the city's growth, with 2,000 new housing units anticipated by 2030.
- A number of provisions for mixed-use development are included to encourage context-sensitive design and appropriately scaling development.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- The housing assessment and policies should be updated to inventory the existing housing stock by type within the center and encourage a variety of housing types accessible and affordable at different income levels and for special needs populations.
- The Comprehensive Plan's Housing element includes provisions for a wide range of housing types, affordable housing, and actions to increase the supply of housing throughout the city. The city should update these actions and provisions to South Hill to strengthen the plan and provide a clearer pathway for expanding housing options within the center to meet center growth targets.

Economy

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following economy policy topics:

Key sectors and industry clusters in the center.

Economic development policies and programs for the center.

DISCUSSION:

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Economy requirements.

- Key sectors for South Hill are described in detail. The center is focused around the South Hill Mall and other national retailers, which account for a major share of economic activity in the center. Other sectors include medical services, small-scale industrial businesses, and chain restaurants.
- Policies to manage economic development by creating a business association, neighborhood service center, and opportunities for networking and advocacy support current activities and encourage economic growth in the center.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the economy policies:

- The city should consider updating the market study for South Hill to better understand current economic conditions and explore strategies to meet its target for 2,500 new jobs by 2030.

Public Services

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Center Subarea Plan Checklist calls for center plans to address the following public services topics:

Local capital plans for infrastructure, such as sewer, water, gas, electric and telecommunications, including financing and strategies to ensure facilities are provided consistent with planned growth.

DISCUSSION:

The South Hill plan effectively addresses the Public Service requirements.

- ☑ Policies and implementation measures to coordinate growth in South Hill with increased capacity of public service infrastructure are included. Coordination with the city's update of the Sanitary Sewer System Comprehensive Plan is highlighted.
- ☑ The plan identifies using Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) grants to plan and build public service infrastructure.

Transportation

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following transportation policy topics:

Integrated multimodal transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

Regional high-capacity transit, local transit and coordination with transit agencies.

Complete streets provisions for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, vehicles, and – where appropriate – freight.

Context-sensitive design provisions for transportation facilities.

Environmentally friendly street treatments (green streets).

Level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions tailored for the center to encourage transit.

Parking management strategy that addresses supply of parking, on-street parking and mitigating effects of parking.

Mode-split goals.

DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Transportation requirements.

- ☑ The plan identifies coordination with Sound Transit and Pierce Transit to improve local transit access and plan for high capacity transit to better connect South Hill with regional destinations.
- ☑ The plan includes provisions for complete streets and maps out specific streets for new vehicular and bike facilities, priority pedestrian routes, and transit stops to improve safety and access.
- ☑ The plan prioritizes designing transportation facilities to be at the pedestrian scale with features like mid-block crossings, small block sizes, nonmotorized trails, minimum sidewalk widths, lighting, seating, and wayfinding.
- ☑ The plan calls for considering transitioning to a multimodal level-of-service standard that is more consistent with the city's vision for South Hill and reduces single-occupancy vehicle travel.
- ☑ Plans to implement a Transportation Management Association will provide ongoing support for and enhance access to transit in South Hill.
- ☑ The plan recommends strategies to manage parking supply and mitigate demand by establishing parking maximums, shared parking, and carpooling. The plan also identifies strategies to better integrate parking into the urban form.
- ☑ Mode-split goals have been adopted for the center. The city is planning for a reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips from 83% in 2010 to 70% in 2035.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ The city should consider long term strategies to reduce superblocks and create a more compact street grid to enhance connectivity and promote nonmotorized transportation.

Conclusion

PSRC thanks the city for working through the plan review and certification process for the center subarea plan. The Puyallup South Hill plan effectively addresses the requirements of the Regional Center Plan Checklist, demonstrating consistency with VISION 2040, and is recommended for certification. The adopted Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers and center plans again in 2025, following the adoption of VISION 2050 and local plan updates. In 2025, PSRC review will ensure that center plans, center growth targets, and local comprehensive plans have been updated to be consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework.

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