

# Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

## Seattle Downtown Regional Growth Center



### Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate Downtown Seattle as a regional growth center under the Regional Centers Framework, provided the city meets applicable regional criteria. 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:

- Adopt a subarea plan for the center by December 31, 2027

### Background










The Downtown Seattle regional growth center is the leading commercial, cultural, and advanced technology center in the Pacific Northwest and features the city’s central business and retail districts. This includes historic areas such as Pioneer Square, the International District, and the Pike Place Market. Downtown serves as a hub for Seattle’s transportation and cultural amenities, ranging from its historic waterfront to theaters, museums, galleries, stores, hotels, and port facilities. The center is served by light rail, commuter rail, ferries, bus, and I-5.

## Evaluation of Regional Growth Centers Requirements

**Status Icons:**

 On track    
  Needs attention    
  Does not meet criteria    
  N/A

Criteria		Status
Center Type	—	Metro Growth Center
Existing Density Required: 30 people/acre		The Downtown Seattle Regional Growth Center's current density is 253 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 85 people/acre		The Downtown Seattle Regional Growth Center's planned density is 345 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		30% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 320 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The Downtown Seattle Regional Growth Center is currently 934 acres, which is larger than the maximum center size. The center qualifies for an acreage exception because it has an internal high-capacity transit system.

Criteria		Status
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing light rail, streetcar, monorail, commuter rail, ferry, bus rapid transit, and bus service 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 79 people per acre.
Center Subarea Plan		The city has not adopted a subarea plan for the center. Please see recommended designation conditions regarding adoption of the center subarea plan.

### Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

The City of Seattle is in the process of developing the draft subarea plan for the Downtown Seattle center. The draft will be ready for public review soon and the City anticipates adopting the plan in 2026. The large size of the Downtown Seattle Regional Center reflects its regional importance, scale as the heart of the region’s largest city, and importance as a regional hub for transportation. Circulation within the center is facilitated with multiple transit modes, including streetcar, multiple light rail stations, bus, and monorail.