

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate Northgate 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.

The regional growth center should be reclassified as an Urban Growth Center under the regional center criteria.

To meet conditions, the city will complete the following by December 31, 2027:

- Adopt a subarea plan for the center, and
- Review the regional center boundary and east-west access to ensure that pedestrian connectivity is provided throughout the center and to the light rail station. The city will submit documentation of the boundary review for PSRC board approval.

Background








Seattle’s Northgate regional growth center developed around the first auto-oriented suburban style mall in the post-war United States. Consequently, the community was built in a pattern of large blocks separated by busy arterial streets. With the opening of the Northgate Light Rail station in 2021 and a new ice complex, the center is being redeveloped with a mix of retail and residential uses. The center is bisected by I-5, which serves as the western edge of the center’s commercial core and includes North Seattle College.

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 Northgate Regional Growth Center's current density is 47 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre		The Northgate Regional Growth Center's planned density is 62 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		60% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The Northgate Regional Growth Center is currently 409 acres, which meets the criteria. However, the city should review the boundary to support a compact and walkable center.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing light 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 3 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 completing a subarea plan for Northgate. A public draft is anticipated to be released in early 2026 with Council adoption by the end of 2026. Areas of new policy development include strategic densification around the Link light rail station and improvements to pedestrian connectivity via the breaking up of large blocks.