

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Seattle South Lake Union Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate South Lake Union 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









Seattle’s South Lake Union regional growth center is located between downtown and Lake Union, bounded by I-5 to the east and SR-99 to the west. The area had been primarily characterized by low scale warehouse uses, but Amazon’s corporate headquarters, and new housing, office, and commercial development have quickly transformed the center. The city has provided new facilities to support this growth, including the South Lake Union Streetcar, Lake Union Park at the south end of the lake, and improvements to the Mercer Corridor.

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		South Lake Union’s current density is 260 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 85 people/acre		South Lake Union’s planned density is 356 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		25% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 320 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		South Lake Union is currently 359 acres.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing streetcar, bus rapid transit, and bus service and is planning for light rail to serve the community.
Market Potential: Demonstrated capacity to support growth targets	—	A market study was not required.

Criteria	Status	
		Since 2010, the center has increased density by 195 people per acre.
Subarea/Centers Plan		The city has not adopted a subarea plan for the center. Please see recommended designation conditions regarding adoption of the subarea plan.

Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

The City of Seattle has begun work on a subarea plan for the South Lake Union Regional Center and anticipates adopting the plan in 2027. Link light rail service will be added during the planning period, improving high-capacity transit service.