

# Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Seattle University District Regional Growth Center



## Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate Seattle’s University District 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 University District is heavily oriented around the campus, students, and businesses of the University of Washington, including substantial multifamily housing and a commercial corridor along University Way that serves the neighborhood. A new light rail station opened in the neighborhood in 2021, bringing increased development to the area.

## 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 University District Regional Growth Center's current density is 94 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 85 people/acre		The University District Regional Growth Center's planned density is 109 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		68% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 320 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The University District Regional Growth Center is currently 753 acres, accommodating two transit stations. The center qualifies for an acreage exception because it is served by multiple light rail stations.
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.
Market Potential: Demonstrated capacity to support growth targets	—	A market study was not required.  Since 2010, the center has increased density by 19 people per acre.

Criteria	Status
Subarea/Centers Plan	 <p>The city has not adopted a subarea plan for the center. Please see recommended designation conditions regarding adoption of the subarea plan.</p>

**Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context**

The City of Seattle has begun work on a subarea plan for the University District center and anticipates adopting the plan in 2027. Policy focus areas could include urbanization of the less dense pockets of the subarea and improvements to east-west connectivity, particularly to the easternmost Link light rail station. The presence of two light rail stations and large university campus justify an acreage exception for this center.