

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Tukwila Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate Tukwila 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 complete the following by December 31, 2027:

- Review the regional center boundary to meet regional size criteria. The city will submit documentation of the boundary review for PSRC board approval.
- Adopt growth targets for the regional growth center and ensure that the center has sufficient capacity to achieve the required planned density of at least 45 people per acre.

Additional recommendations:

- While numerous requirements have been addressed through the 2024 comprehensive plan and the subarea plan, the city should update the Tukwila Southcenter plan to refresh information and address all requirements documented in the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Centers.

Background



The Tukwila regional growth center is a major shopping and employment center, containing a mix of high intensity retail, commercial, industrial, and office uses. The city's commercial center is located in the Southcenter area, at the intersection of I-5 and I-405. The center is served by Sounder and Amtrak service and has seen recent high-density 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 Tukwila Regional Growth Center's current density is 23 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre	⊘ The Tukwila Regional Growth Center's planned density is 45 people per acre, which meets the criteria. However, the plan doesn't demonstrate capacity to achieve the

Criteria		Status
		stated density goal. The city’s plan should document that the center has sufficient zoned development capacity. Growth targets should be established to specify residential and employment growth in the center.
Mix of Uses: 15% of planned residential and employment activity	-	The growth targets do not detail the share of growth planned for employment or residential uses. The growth targets should be revised to provide this level of detail.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)	-	The Tukwila Regional Growth Center is currently 847 acres. The city should review the boundary to meet regional size criteria.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit	✓	The center has existing commuter rail, 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 2 people per acre.
Center Subarea Plan	—	The center subarea plan was last certified in 2020. Please see the updated certification report for additional planning recommendations.

Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

Thank you for your draft criteria report on Tukwila’s Regional Growth Center. Responses to the specific criteria where the City was determined to have not met the criteria are provided below.

For additional context, the Tukwila’s Regional Growth Center has experienced considerable growth in residential units, with four developments and approximately 955 units created, where no residential units previously existed, within the last 10 years. The City has renewed and expanded its 8- and 12-year multifamily tax exemptions to encourage additional housing development within any portion of the Center that permits residential uses ([TMC 3.90](#)). Similarly, a code amendment in the Fall of 2025, significantly

reduced the parking required for residential units and commercial uses, greatly increasing the flexibility for TOD-focused development.

Job growth within the Center has been inconsistent and reflective of broader market trends and limitations. The Center has a number of warehouse, office, light manufacturing, and low-density retail uses which have been subject to declining regional warehouse and office demand. With the exception of a few hotel projects, limited investment products have shown potential for dense reuse of existing underutilized warehouse spaces, whereas lower job density uses, such as athletic facilities or entertainment uses, have been noted to provide the highest market demand for these spaces. Without full site redevelopment and considerable capital outlay, this current market condition limits the potential for density growth in these spaces.

Planned Target Density:

Staff recognizes the inconsistencies between planned housing and job capacity in the Urban Center and minimum target density threshold for planning. Staff is committed to reevaluating the planned density targets in conjunction with urban growth center boundary modifications. It is believed that values submitted for the urban growth capacity report within the regional growth center are inaccurate and do not represent the capacity of the Center. Staff will work to reevaluate core assumptions made in deriving these values as part of the process.

Mix of Uses:

A detailed breakout of the planned residential and employment growth totals will be incorporated into City updates.

Size:

The City recognizes the large existing regional growth center area, which exceeds the maximum size criteria for centers without continuous high-capacity transit service areas. Staff will explore areas for potential reduction in Center boundaries, with special focus given to areas currently predominantly industrial in use or having limited potential for future dense development.

Additional Topics in Future Regional Center Plan Updates:

Staff appreciates PSRC's comments identifying items that should be incorporated into future updates of the regional center plan and agrees with this request. Items such as

capital improvement needs, the need to serve a diverse community, and the priority of creating pathways to affordable housing are included throughout many parts of the City's comprehensive plan, but may not be specifically highlighted in the element addressing the regional center.