

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

University Place Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Redesignate University Place as a regional growth center under the Regional Centers Framework. The center supports VISION 2050's goals to create compact, livable places that accommodate significant regional growth, while promoting sustainability and inclusion.

Additional recommendations:

- The city should adopt growth targets for the regional growth center that plan for a mix of uses. The targets should ensure that at least 15% of planned activity is for employment growth.
- The city should review the regional center boundary to ensure walkability and connectivity throughout the center.

Background








The University Place regional growth center includes a mix of commercial, civic, single and multifamily residential, and light industrial uses. It is divided into three districts—the Northeast Business District, the 27th Street Business District, and the Town Center District. The Northeast Business District provides higher intensity commercial, mixed use, multifamily, and light industrial uses, the 27th Street Business District maintains a hometown feel with smaller scale mixed use retail, commercial, and middle housing, and the Town Center District serves as the heart of the community as the city’s civic center and regional commercial hub.

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 University Place Regional Growth Center's current density is 23 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre		The University Place Regional Growth Center's planned density is 46 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		88% of planned growth is expected to be residential. The city should continue to encourage additional employment activity in the center.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The University Place Regional Growth Center is currently 481 acres.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing bus service to serve the community. Sound Transit’s T Line extension to Tacoma Community College will be adjacent to the northeast border of the regional growth center.

Criteria		Status
Market Potential: Demonstrated capacity to support growth targets	—	A market study was not required. Since 2010, the center has increased density by 5 people per acre.
Center Subarea Plan	—	The center subarea plan was last certified in 2018. Please see the updated certification report for additional planning recommendations.

Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

After the Regional Growth Center (RGC) designation in 2018 the City adopted new form-based zoning regulations that increased heights, eliminated maximum densities and provided more flexibility in commercial uses.

These changes led to following developments in the RGC:

- 581 new residential units built.
- 40,000 SF of new commercial space built.
- 207 residential units under construction.
- 20,000 SF of commercial under construction.
- 378 units of affordable senior housing with 10,000 SF of commercial space set to break ground in April of 2026.

To further implement PSRC's VISION 2050 Regional Centers Framework, the City has completed District Plans for the three business districts in the Regional Growth Center.

The three district plans further refine the original Regional Growth Center plan with public outreach, recommended actions and capacity analysis to ensure conformance with VISION 2050 goals and PSRC's Regional Centers Framework.

Additionally, the City has completed a number of pedestrian improvement projects within the RGC that are a direct result of the designation. These projects improve access to and within the RGC, and include sidewalk, planter, and bicycle lane improvements. These include:

- Bridgeport Way West Phase 4

- 27th Street West Phase 2
- 35th Street West Phase 1 (East side of Bridgeport Way.)
- 35th Street West Phase 2 (West side of Bridgeport Way.)
- 36th Street West Roundabout