

Regional Growth Center Plan Certification Report Renton City Center Community Plan

January 8, 2026



The Renton Regional Growth Center is located in King County and was designated as a regional growth center by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) in 1995. The City Center Community Plan seeks to create a vibrant and memorable downtown that serves as an important employment center.

PSRC conducted a certification review of the City of Renton’s City Center Community Plan. Renton originally adopted their center plan in 2011 and last amended the plan 2018. The city’s center plan was not previously certified by PSRC.

Certification Action

The Puget Sound Regional Council conditionally certifies that the City of Renton’s City Center Community Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers, provided that additional amendments are incorporated into the subarea plan.

Conditional status is in place until the City of Renton updates the subarea plan to address the [VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans](#). The city acknowledges this and commits to addressing the conditions according to the following schedule:

1. City council adoption of a work plan by April 30, 2026, that addresses the conditions identified in the certification report and outlines the process and timeline to update the subarea plan.
2. Submission of a draft center subarea plan and supporting documents that address the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool to PSRC for review and comment in advance of adoption.
3. Once the conditions are adequately addressed, submission of the adopted amended subarea plan and supporting documents by December 31, 2027, for review and certification by PSRC.

Conditions for full certification are described in more detail in the body of this report (see pp. 3-4).



The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the City Center Community Plan and recommendations for future work to advance consistency with VISION 2050.

About Regional Growth Centers Certification

VISION 2050 directs jurisdictions with regional growth centers and/or manufacturing/industrial centers to develop subarea plans (DP-Action-8 and p. 80). This expectation has been in place since the PSRC Executive Board adopted the Plan Review Process in 2003. The review process is required by the [Regional Centers Framework](#) to both certify existing plans and when designating new regional centers.

VISION 2050, the Regional Transportation Plan, and PSRC’s Adopted Policy and Plan Review process call for PSRC to review and certify these subarea planning efforts.¹ The [Regional Centers Framework Update](#) requires a review of centers in 2025, following local comprehensive plan updates. All regional centers are expected to have adopted subarea plans that meet the requirements of the Regional Centers Framework and VISION 2050. Certification of a subarea plan affirms the planning direction for the regional center is consistent with VISION 2050 and is an opportunity to identify any additional planning recommendations to better align with regional policy.

Report Format

The report contains a brief section of background information for each center. Following the background, the colored blocks reflect the scope of the certification review, based on the [VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans](#). The discussion in each topic area summarizes key aspects of the plan and highlights unique or outstanding efforts. This section also identifies any areas for improvement where a jurisdiction may need to align more closely with VISION 2050, the Regional Transportation Plan, and/or center planning requirements. Any applicable conditions for certification are outlined in the recommendation section at the end of the report.

¹ The specific requirements for center planning are provided in [PSRC’s Plan Review Manual](#), and the process is also described in [VISION 2050: Implementation](#). Certification of the jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan for consistency with the regional transportation plan, regionally established guidelines and policies, and Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning is completed through a separate board action.



Plan Vision & Regional Collaboration

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Establish a **vision for the center**, including a commitment to compact, pedestrian and transit-oriented development.
- Document the center’s **development potential** through a market analysis.
- Describe the approach for **equitable engagement** with community and stakeholders.
- **Coordinate** with tribes, ports, military installations, special purpose districts, and adjacent jurisdictions.
- Prioritize **services and access to opportunity** for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.
- Prioritize **local investments** in the center.

Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan addresses some of the center visioning provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The plan recognizes the diversity of the city center and includes policies to support the community and provide services and access to opportunity. The plan includes a vision for the center that envisions a dense, thriving community well-connected by transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities.

CONDITIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

The Regional Centers Framework requires a center plan that meets regional criteria. The adopted center plan includes a variety of implementation actions but has not been substantially updated to address regional criteria.

The City of Renton will address the requirements of the [VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans](#) to maintain certified status. The city will update the center plan to meet regional expectations, including:

- A plan vision and horizon year that aligns with the city’s 2044 comprehensive plan.
- Review the regional center boundary to ensure that the area functions as a cohesive regional center and pedestrian connectivity is provided throughout. The city will submit a memo that documents justification of the boundary for PSRC board approval.
- Policies and summary of public engagement that advance equity in the planning process.



- Clear documentation of which policies and strategies apply to the regional center compared to the broader city center subarea.
- Incorporation of growth targets that represent a significant share of citywide growth, along with information on the center’s development potential.
- Updated existing conditions specific to the center on land use, housing, employment, environment, and transportation.
- Goals, policies, and relevant implementation steps that address land use, environment, climate change, housing, economy, transportation, and capital facilities.
- Updated list of transportation projects relevant to the regional growth center.

PSRC staff are available to consult with city staff as this work is completed by the schedule identified on p. 1 of this report.

Environment and Climate Change

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Identify significant environmental features, including existing and planned **parks, trails and open spaces**.
- Minimize gaps in **equitable access** to parks and open spaces.
- Identify provisions to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.
- Expand **electric vehicle infrastructure**.
- Promote innovative **green building practices** and encourage retrofitting.
- Avoid and mitigate environmental impacts on **vulnerable populations**.

Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan addresses some of the environment and climate provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The plan includes a Parks, Open Space, and Recreation section and identifies environmental features, parks, trails, and open spaces.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the center/subarea plan and/or associated planning documents:

- The plan should update existing conditions in parks, trails, and open spaces. The plan should also address relevant policies on parks, the environment, and climate change in the context of the regional growth center.



Land Use/Development Patterns

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Define **compact, walkable boundaries and shape** for the center.
- Include residential and employment **growth targets** accommodating a significant share of the jurisdiction's growth.
- Describe and map distribution and location of **existing and future land uses**. Encourage a mix of complementary uses.
- Develop **design standards** for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development and other transit-supportive planning that focuses land uses around transit.
- Outline center's role in achieving VISION 2050's goal of attracting **65% of regional population growth and 75% of employment growth** to centers and high-capacity transit station areas.

Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan addresses some of the land use/development pattern provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The plan describes and maps the mix of uses in the center. The plan also focuses on creating design standards that will help achieve a visually cohesive center.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the center/subarea plan and/or associated planning documents:

- The comprehensive plan includes growth targets for jobs and employment in the center, but the targets of 2,000 housing units and 3,500 jobs do not account for a significant share of Renton's overall growth allocations of 17,000 housing units and 31,780 jobs. Renton should consider focusing a more significant share of the city's allocated growth in the center in future updates. The updated growth targets should be incorporated into the city center plan.



Housing

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Document **existing and targeted housing units** by type, affordability, and special needs housing.
- Assess **future housing needs** through a housing needs assessment.
- Address **density standards and development regulations** for housing types, addressing income bands.
- Reduce risk of displacement through a variety of **anti-displacement strategies**; preserve existing affordable housing.
- Encourage **partnerships with housing organizations** to promote more equitable housing opportunities.

Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan address some of the housing provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The Comprehensive Plan includes a variety of housing policies applicable at the city-wide level.

The city should address the following comments in future updates to the center/subarea plan and/or associated planning documents:

- While the city's comprehensive plan addresses housing citywide, the city should update the subarea plan to clearly identify relevant data and housing strategies to support both affordable and market rate housing in the regional growth center. The documentation should include a breakdown of housing type, affordability, special housing needs, and displacement risk.
- Regional growth centers are critical locations to encourage affordable housing and provide opportunities for all. The city is encouraged to continue to work with regional partners to implement housing strategies to support affordable housing development in the center.



Economy

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Describe **key economic sectors and industry clusters** including those in the Regional Economic Strategy.
- Demonstrate the center’s **market potential** for accommodating future population and job growth.
- Reduce the risk of **commercial displacement** through multiple strategies.
- Expand **access to economic opportunity**; identify pipeline education and training opportunities.

Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan addresses some of the economic provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The plan encourages the use of economic development tools to expand employment opportunities within the center.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the center/subarea plan and/or associated planning documents:

- Updated policies and data on economic development should be integrated into the City Center Community Plan.

Transportation

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Describe connections to **regional high-capacity transit systems** and address existing and planned transit services and coordination with transit agencies.
- Identify **planned transportation investments**, policies, programs, and resources, including transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, connectivity, superblock removal, and projects promoting safety.
- **Encourage** environmentally friendly “green street” treatments.
- Adopt **level-of-service standards** and concurrency provisions designed to promote transit use.
- Establish a **parking management strategy** covering supply, on-street parking, and mitigating impact.
- Include **mode split goals** to reduce single occupant vehicle trips.



Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan addresses some of the transportation provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The plan describes the center's relationship to regional high-capacity transit and demonstrates coordination with transit agencies. The plan includes a policy to continue reviewing parking management strategies for the center.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the center/subarea plan and/or associated planning documents:

- The plan should provide updated information on planned transportation investments to support an integrated, multimodal transportation system in the center, including updated information on the transportation network and policies to support mode shift.

Public Services

Scope of Review

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Describe **local capital plans for infrastructure**, such as sewer, water, gas, electric and telecommunications, including financing and strategies to ensure facilities are provided consistent with planned growth.

Certification Findings

The City Center Community Plan addresses some of the public services provisions of the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool. The plan includes a policy to ensure the center is adequately served by school facilities.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the center/subarea plan and/or associated planning documents:

- The subarea plan does not specifically address capital facilities and financing. The plan should be updated to address the requirements documented in the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool.

Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found the City of Renton City Center Community Plan addresses some of the planning expectations for regional growth centers but requires additional amendments to ensure full consistency. The report outlines various topics to be addressed through an updated subarea plan.



PSRC is available to provide assistance with future plan updates. Find additional planning resources on [PSRC's Plan Review webpage](#). If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann, Principal Planner, at 206-464-6174 and LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org.

