Puget Sound Regional Council

Growth Management Policy Board

Thursday, September 17, 2026 • 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting – PSRC Board Room: 1201 Third Avenue, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98101

Watch or listen

- Watch the meeting live at www.psrc.org/watch-meetings
- Listen by phone 1-888-475-4499, Meeting ID: 872 8028 7447, Passcode: 120770

Attend

- The public can attend meetings at PSRC's office.
- PSRC staff will be available to provide floor access 10 minutes before the meeting's start time and up to 15 minutes after the meeting's start time.
- If you arrive outside of these times, please call 206-464-7090 for assistance.

Provide public comment

- **Public comment must relate to an action or discussion item on the agenda. Each member of the public will have 2 minutes to speak.**
- **In-person:**
  Public comment may be made in person at PSRC's office.
- **Comment during the meeting by Zoom or phone:**
  Registration is required and closes at 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. Late registrations will not be accepted.
- **Written comments:**
  Comments may be submitted via email to HCulver@psrc.org by 8:00 a.m. the day of the meeting. Comments will be shared with board members.

Public comments are public records and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56.

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1. **Call to Order (10:00) – Councilmember Ed Prince, Chair**
2. **Communications and Public Comment**

   Public comment must relate to an action or discussion item on the agenda.
3. **Report of the Chair**
4. **Director's Report**
5. **Consent Agenda - Action Items (10:20)**
   a. Approve Minutes of Growth Management Policy Board held July 16, 2026

6. **Discussion Item (10:25)**
   a. 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act – *Leslie Pollner, Manatt*
7. **Discussion Item (10:45)**
   a. Housing Production – Are We on Track? – *Eric Clute, PSRC*
8. **Discussion Item (11:05)**
   a. Regional Housing Needs Assessment Update – *David Dixon, PSRC*
9. **Discussion Item (11:25)**
   a. Regional Centers Framework Update – *Nancy Ferber, PSRC*
10. **Information Items**
    a. GMPB Meeting Calendar 2026
    b. TOOLBOX: Local Economic Development Efforts Flyer
    c. TOD on a Roll: Making the Most of New Transit Connections Flyer
    d. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency Support for Regional Climate Action
11. **Next Meeting: October 15, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

    Major Topics:
    - Plan Certifications
    - 2026 State Legislative Agenda Development
    - Regional Centers Framework
    - Analysis of Changes to Housing Capacity
    - Open Space Plan
12. **Adjourn (12:00)**

Board members, please submit proposed amendments and materials prior to the meeting for distribution. Organizations/individuals may submit information for distribution. Send to Heather Culver, e-mail HCulver@psrc.org or mail.

For language or ADA assistance at PSRC board meetings, please contact us at 206-464-7090 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. For TTY-based telecommunications relay service dial 711.

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Puget Sound Regional Council

MINUTES

Growth Management Policy Board
Thursday, July 16, 2026
Hybrid Meeting – PSRC Board Room: 1201 Third Avenue, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98101

[To watch a video of the meeting and hear the discussion, go to https://www.psrc.org/watch-meetings]

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Councilmember Megan Dunn, Vice Chair.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CHAIR'S REPORT

The Vice Chair had nothing to report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director of Growth Management Paul Inghram welcomed the board and briefly introduced the agenda and made note of the information items included in the packet.

CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approve Minutes of Growth Management Policy Board Meeting held June 18, 2026.

ACTION: It was moved and seconded (Fullerton/Stuart) to adopt the Consent Agenda. The motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEM: REGIONAL CENTERS FRAMEWORK SCOPING

The board discussed and finalized the scope of updates to the Regional Centers Framework. Staff will begin research on policy topics and share policy options for the board to review in September.

DISCUSSION ITEM: REGIONAL OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE

PSRC staff provided an update on the development of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan. The board gave input on strategies and tools to include in the plan. Staff will share the draft plan for review in the fall.

DISCUSSION ITEM: PUGET SOUND RECOVERY

Mindy Roberts, Executive Director of Puget Sound Partnership, led the board in discussion on Puget Sound recovery efforts. The board shared ideas for collaboration with PSRC and Puget Sound Partnership staff and how to integrate support for Puget Sound recovery into local work.

NEXT MEETING

The board will meet on Thursday, September 17, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Topics include:

- Regional Centers Framework
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment
- Housing Production by Jurisdiction

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS

a. Attendance Roster – July 16, 2026

Growth Management Policy Board - July 16, 2026							
Voting Members			✓	Non-voting Members			✓
King County	2	CM Rhonda Lewis	1	Associate Members			
		Vacant		Alderwood Water and Wastewater District	1	COM Paul McIntyre	
						John McClellan Alt	
Seattle	2	CM Maritza Rivera		Thurston Regional Planning Council	1	Vacant	
		CM Eddie Lin				Allison Osterberg Alt	1
		CM Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Alt		Public Agency Members			
Bellevue	1	CM Vishal Bhargava	1	Commerce	1	Dave Andersen	
		DM Dave Hamilton, Alt				Mark Barkley Alt	
Cities & Towns in King County	3	CM Ed Prince, Renton - Chair		Public Health Agencies	1	DIR Chantall Harmon Reed, Tac-Pierce Cnty	
		CM Pam Stuart, Sammamish	1			Yolanda Fong Alt	
		Mayor Amy McHenry, Alt - Duvall	1	PSRC Committees			
		CP Satwinder Kaur, Alt - Kent	1	Regional Staff Committee	1	Andrea Spencer	1
		Mayor Mark Mullet, Alt - Issaquah	1			Vacant	
		CM Cheryl Paquette, Alt - Carnation		Equity Advisory Committee	1	Corey Orvold	1
Kitsap County	1	COM Christine Rolfes	1			Laurenne Sayles Alt	1
		COM Oran Root, Alt		Private/Civic Members-Business/Labor			
Bremerton	1	MYR Greg Wheeler	1	Master Builders of King and Snohomish Counties	1	Brian Holtzclaw	1
		CP Jane Rebelowski, Alt				Vacant Alt	
Cities & Towns in Kitsap County	1	CM Ashley Mathews, Bainbridge Isl		Natural and Built Environments (exp.	1	Angela Rozmyn	
		MYR Ed Stern, Alt - Poulsbo				Robert Pantley Alt	
Pierce County	1	CM Robyn Denson		Individual	1	Charlotte Murry	
		CM Paul Herrera, Alt				Vacant Alt	
Tacoma	1	CM Sandesh Sadalge		Private/Civic Members-Community/Environment			
		CM Sarah Rumbaugh, Alt	1	Futurewise	1	Alex Brennan	1
Cities & Towns in Pierce County	1	CM Ben Coronado, Gig Harbor				Jazmine Smith, Alt	
		CM Gwendolyn Fullerton, Alt - Bonney Lake	1	Housing Development Consortium - Seattle/King	1	Patience Malaba	
Snohomish County	1	CM Megan Dunn - Vice Chair	1			Jesse Simpson Alt	
		CM Sam Low, Alt		Emerald Alliance	1	Tracy Stanton	1
Everett	1	CM Scott Bader	1			Vacant Alt	
		MYR Cassie Franklin, Alt					
Cities & Towns in Snohomish County	1	MYR Joe Marine, Mukilteo					
		CP Nick Coelho, Alt - Lynnwood	1	Non Voting	12		
Federally Recognized Tribes							
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe	1	Vacant					
Puyallup Tribe of Indians	1	Robert Barandon					
		Vacant					
Suquamish Tribe	1	Vacant					
		Alison O'Sullivan Alt					
Statutory Members							
Ports	1	COM Deanna Keller, Tacoma					
		COM JT Wilcox, Alt - Tacoma				Abbreviations	
WSDOT	1	Jeff Storrar				CM Councilmember	
		Cameron Kukes, Alt "KOOK-es" - 2 syllables				COM Commissioner	
						CP Council President	
Voting	22	(Quorum = 11) Quorum Total	12			DM Deputy Mayor	

Puget Sound Regional Council

September 10, 2026

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Growth Management Policy Board

From: Paul Inghram, Director of Growth Management

Subject: **21st Century ROAD to Housing Act**

IN BRIEF

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act became law on July 11, 2026, following a year of negotiation between the House, Senate, and White House. This comprehensive housing bill is the first major federal housing action in decades, and it addresses multiple aspects of federal actions intended to spur housing development and improve affordability. Leslie Pollner from PSRC's federal consultant, Manatt, will brief the board on this important legislation and discuss what the act means for local jurisdictions.

DISCUSSION

H.R. 6644, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, includes 47 housing-related provisions designed to expand the production and preservation of affordable housing, modernize federal housing programs, and reduce regulatory barriers to housing development. The legislation contains a variety of program changes and incentives that will have an impact on local planning. Key changes include:

- Development of model codes for zoning and land use reform
- Support for code innovation, including single-stair permitting guidelines
- Development of pre-approved plans and pattern books
- Grants to support local planning capacity and innovation
- Incentives for local housing production in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Changes to federal environmental reviews for targeted housing projects
- Reforms covering modular and manufactured housing
- Pilot programs for adaptive reuse and commercial-to-residential conversions
- New Opportunity Zone incentives
- Support for preserving existing affordable housing through renovation and repair

- Additional provisions supporting housing supply and affordability

However, none of the provisions are self-executing. Instead, federal agencies, led primarily by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), must complete a number of implementation actions before many of the reforms can take effect. The legislation also authorizes 11 new programs, nine of which will require congressional appropriations.

A summary of the Act from Manatt is attached.

Additionally, the National League of Cities provides an article about the ten things local leaders should know about the act.

The American Planning Association also provides a summary of the law and many of its components.

NEXT STEPS

Manatt is continually tracking the federal implementation of the act, including how its programs will be supported in the 2028 appropriations.

For additional information, please contact Robin Koskey, Direction of Government Relations, at RKoskey@psrc.org.

ATTACHMENTS

A. 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act Implementation Guide – August 2026

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STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS GROUP

21st Century ROAD to Housing Act Implementation Guide – August 2026

Overview

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act became law on July 11 after House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) transmitted the bill to President Trump on June 29, triggering a 10-day review period. Because the President neither signed nor vetoed the bill during that period, the bill became law. While passage of the bill was significant, more action is needed for the bill's programs to be fully implemented.

The legislation includes 47 housing-related provisions designed to expand the production and preservation of affordable housing, modernize federal housing programs, and reduce regulatory barriers to housing development. However, none of the provisions are self-executing. Instead, federal agencies, led primarily by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), must complete a significant number of implementation actions before many of the reforms can take effect.

According to the National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders (NAAHL), the law requires 124 housing-related implementation actions, with HUD serving as the lead agency for 88 actions, or 71 percent. Congress directed that 58 of these actions be completed within the first year. HUD's ability to carry out these responsibilities could be constrained by recent staffing reductions. For example, NAAHL notes that approximately 60 percent of reports and 58 percent of notices due within the first year fall heavily on HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, which has experienced a 27 percent staffing reduction since FY 2025. Further, HUD's Office of General Counsel, which must review all implementation actions before they are finalized, lost 207 full-time employees between FY 2025 and FY 2026, representing a 35 percent decrease in staffing.

In addition to reports and notices, the act directs HUD to work on nine rulemakings. These additional rulemakings come as HUD's Summer 2026 Unified Agenda already lists 54 proposed and final rules in development. During the previous presidential administration, HUD completed an average of roughly four significant interim or final rules annually.[1]

[1] Report prepared with the help of the National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders' (NAAHL) Implementation Matrix and its brief entitled, "ROADmap: An Implementation Guide for the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act."

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STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS GROUP

New Programs

The legislation also authorizes 11 new programs that could impact local governments, nine of which will require congressional appropriations before HUD can release Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs). Because the legislation sunsets many of these new programs after a few years, delays in securing appropriations or agency implementation could significantly reduce the timeframe in which these programs can operate. For example, both the Temperature Sensor Pilot (Sec. 106) and the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act/CDBG-DR (Sec. 504) are scheduled to sunset on July 11, 2029, just three years after enactment. It should also be noted that the law only authorizes specific funding levels for some programs, while other programs are authorized without a specific funding amount.

Significant new programs include:

- **Grants for Planning and Implementation Associated with Affordable Housing (Sec. 207):** This section establishes a new competitive grant pilot program to support planning and implementation activities for affordable housing. These activities include updating regulatory processes, increasing capacity to conduct inspections, and coordinating housing development with transportation planning. This section requires appropriations, but the text does not specify an authorized amount.
    - July 11, 2027: Deadline for HUD to establish the program.
    - July 11, 2031: Grants for Planning and Implementation Associated with Affordable Housing sunsets.
- **Innovation Fund (Sec. 208):** This section authorizes a $200 million annual competitive grant program for each of the fiscal years 2027 through 2031 for local governments and tribes that demonstrate measurable increases in housing supply. An eligible entity receiving an Innovation Fund grant may use the funds to carry out activities including, but not limited to, initiatives that facilitate the expansion of the supply of attainable housing, the installation of public works facilities, housing services, development of energy use strategies, and public transportation projects. This program sunsets after seven years and will require appropriations.
    - July 11, 2027: Deadline for HUD to establish the program.
    - July 11, 2033: Innovation Fund program sunsets.

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- **Revitalizing Empty Structures into Desirable Environmental (RESIDE) Act (Sec. 210):** This section creates a pilot program to help local governments convert vacant commercial and industrial buildings into housing, prioritizing economically distressed areas and Opportunity Zones. Individual grants will range from $1 million - $10 million. This program is authorized at $100 million per fiscal year and will require appropriations.
    - FY 2027: HUD to establish the pilot program.
    - September 30, 2031: RESIDE Act sunsets.

- **PRICE Act Grants (Sec. 304):** This section authorizes HUD's Preservation and Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement program for seven years to provide grants to maintain, protect, and stabilize manufactured housing and manufactured housing communities. This section requires appropriations, but the text does not specify an authorized amount.
    - July 11, 2027: HUD to publish a notice establishing application requirements.
    - July 11, 2028: HUD to award grants.
    - July 11, 2033: PRICE Act sunsets.

- **Helping More Families Save Pilot (Sec. 404):** This section authorizes a pilot program under HUD's Family Self-Sufficiency initiative that will test and evaluate an opt-out approach to the Family Self-Sufficiency program, among other program changes. Up to 25 entities serving no more than 5,000 families may participate in the program. This section requires appropriations, but the text does not specify an authorized amount.
    - July 11, 2027: HUD to establish the pilot program.
    - July 11, 2036: Helping More Families Save Pilot sunsets.

- **Reforming Disaster Recovery Act (Sec. 504):** This section authorizes the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program for three years. The CDBG-DR program is a critical mechanism for local governments to rebuild disaster-impacted areas and start the long-term recovery process. Although this section does not authorize a specific funding level, implementation will require appropriations, formal rulemaking, and HUD action.

- August 10, 2026: Deadline for HUD to issue notice with CDBG-DR formula allocation methodologies.
- January 11, 2027: Deadline for HUD to issue proposed consolidated set of implementing regulations.
- July 11, 2027: Deadline for HUD to issue final implementing regulation.
- July 11, 2029: Reforming Disaster Recovery Act sunsets.

Reforms to Existing Programs

The legislation includes 16 reforms to existing federal housing programs that are likely to affect local governments. Implementing these reforms will require substantial HUD action, including rulemakings, reports, notices, guidance documents, and administrative actions.

Some of the most significant reforms include:

- **Addition of Affordable Housing Construction as an Eligible Activity (Sec. 104):** This section adds new construction as an eligible use under HUD's CDBG program and requires all CDBG recipients to publish a searchable, publicly accessible online database of undeveloped land parcels owned by the grantee. This reform does not require appropriations or formal rulemaking but will require HUD to publish a notice.

  - October 1, 2026: Requires all CDBG recipients to publish a searchable, publicly accessible online database of undeveloped land parcels owned by the grantee.

- **Improving Housing in Opportunity Zones (Sec. 201):** This section enables the HUD Secretary to give added weight to applicants for competitive HUD grants that are located in, or primarily serve, designated Opportunity Zones to support housing preservation and construction. This section requires a HUD administrative action.

  - *Effective upon enactment.*

- **Better Use of Intergovernmental and Local Development (BUILD) Housing Act (Sec. 205):** This section authorizes HUD to treat certain housing assistance as "special projects" to help streamline NEPA compliance and expands HUD's authority to delegate certain environmental review responsibilities to states, local governments, and tribes. HUD may implement changes through a Federal Register notice or updated guidance.

- *Effective upon enactment.*

- **Unlocking Housing Supply Through Streamlined and Modernized Reviews Act (Sec. 206):** This section streamlines the NEPA review process for small and infill housing projects by expanding categorical exclusions. This section will require a HUD rulemaking and report.
    - July 11, 2028: First annual report to Congress due, with annual reports required for 5 years thereafter.

- **Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (Sec. 212):** This section increases the cap for the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program by 100,000 units and codifies tenant protections. This section will require HUD guidance, administrative action, and reporting.
    - *Effective upon enactment.*

- **Build Now Act (Sec. 213):** This section ties some localities' Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to their housing production, including boosting localities' funding when they build more housing and adjusting it modestly for those that do not. The allocation of bonuses or funding reductions will begin in the third full fiscal year after enactment and run through fiscal year 2043. This reform does not require appropriations or formal rulemaking but will require HUD to publish a notice and report.
    - September 9, 2026: HUD deadline to inform localities of Build Now Housing Growth Improvement Rate.
    - FY 2030: CDBG funding adjustments based on housing production begin.
    - September 30, 2043: Sunsets.

- **HOME Investment Partnerships Reauthorization and Reform Act (Sec. 501):** This section reforms and reauthorizes the HOME Program and establishes statutory National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) exemptions for certain housing activities. Although this section does not require appropriations, implementation will require formal rulemaking and HUD to issue rulemaking, guidance, administrative action, and a report.
    - January 7, 2027: Build America, Buy America (BABA) implementation review due.

- April 7, 2027: Report to Congress on BABA review and guidance.
- July 11, 2027: Two BABA implementing rulemakings due.

- **Incentivizing Local Solutions to Homelessness (Sec. 503):** This section allows states and localities that receive HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant funding to request a waiver of the statutory 60 percent spending cap on emergency shelter beds and street outreach. The waiver authority is available for FY 2027 through FY 2030. This section will require HUD guidance.
  - *Effective upon enactment.*

Timing and Next Steps

Based on discussions with House and Senate appropriators, securing appropriations for new programs will be the major focus for FY 2028 given that the House has already marked-up its FY 2027 funding bills, and the Senate is expected to release its bills soon. This leaves little opportunity to incorporate funding for new initiatives in this year's appropriations bills. However, we will be working to increase HUD administrative funding in FY 2027 to bolster agency capacity and help facilitate timely implementation.

The Manatt Government Strategies (MGS) Team will also be working to advocate for localities' priorities as HUD implements this legislation and closely monitoring HUD's progress in fulfilling its statutory obligations on its slate of programs, rulemakings, reports, notices, guidance documents, and administrative actions. The attached spreadsheet is a tracker with key program implementation steps and deadlines that will be updated regularly.

Puget Sound Regional Council

September 10, 2026

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Growth Management Policy Board

From: Paul Inghram, Director of Growth Management

Subject: **Housing Production – Are We on Track?**

IN BRIEF

With updates to comprehensive plans now complete, jurisdictions are modifying their codes to accommodate more housing. While housing targets were just used to update these plans, the growth period started in 2019 for King County jurisdictions and 2020 for Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish jurisdictions.

Staff will share early results for the 2026 Regional Housing Strategy monitoring update, this time focusing on overall housing production. Starting with our regional geographies, staff will dive into jurisdiction-level production. The board will be asked for feedback on how this work can help jurisdictions share ideas on how to meet the housing needs laid out in their comprehensive plans.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Housing Strategy is a playbook of regional and local actions to preserve, improve and expand housing stock in the region. The aim is to make a range of affordable, accessible, healthy and safe housing choices available to every resident and to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.

The strategy calls for PSRC to track performance and outcomes over time and identify challenges or barriers in consultation with jurisdictions and other stakeholders. Performance measures support the housing goal in VISION 2050 to meet the region's housing and affordability needs.

The region is about 27% of the way through the growth period out to 2044, which leaves a lot of runway left to meet housing targets. That said, jurisdictions that find themselves behind on production in 2026 will need to see production increase between now and 2044.

Caveats of Analysis
Due to data limitations, this analysis tracks total units produced within each jurisdiction regardless of affordability. That said, this analysis does provide a window into housing production and its geographic spread.

It's common for smaller jurisdictions to have little-to-no housing production followed by one large project coming online. At face value, this can appear like lagging growth, but over a longer period the jurisdiction may meet its housing targets.

Finally, jurisdictions in King County adopted housing targets with a starting year of 2019, while the other three counties started in 2020.

Data Results
The region as a whole has seen housing production rise quickly this decade and is slightly ahead of pace in 2026. However, this production is largely led by Seattle and a handful of other jurisdictions. Most regional geographies are on track, though Core Cities are the furthest behind.

- **Metropolitan Cities:** This group is growing, but only Seattle is producing quickly. The other four cities are not meeting pace for 2026.
- **Core Cities**: Robust housing growth is largely in East King County, with lagging production in the majority of core cities.
- **High-Capacity Transit Communities**: Just less than half of HCT communities saw housing production at pace.
- **Cities & Towns:** About two-thirds of Cities & Towns jurisdictions saw housing production at pace, with some wiggle room for years of slower construction.
- **Urban Unincorporated Areas:** Production in unincorporated areas is at pace in King and ahead in Pierce. Growth in Kitsap and Snohomish is not at pace for 2026.
- **Rural Areas:** Growth continues to occur in rural places, and staff will continue to monitor it. The Regional Growth Strategy aims to encourage new housing within existing urban areas.

Overall Takeaways
The region as a whole appears to be on track to meet its housing targets, but this is largely led by Seattle and a handful of other jurisdictions. These jurisdictions can offer a blueprint to others looking to boost production and meet their housing targets. A full table of data results will be released soon.

NEXT STEPS

Incorporating board feedback, staff will continue to track and report housing production across the region, including in the annual monitoring update.

For additional information, please contact Eric Clute, Associate Planner, at eclute@psrc.org.

Puget Sound Regional Council

September 10, 2026

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Regional Staff Committee

From: **Paul Inghram, Director of Growth Management**

Subject: **Regional Housing Needs Assessment Update**

IN BRIEF

PSRC is conducting an update to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) to guide and inform policy updates ahead of the regional plan update in 2030. Housing continues to be a priority area for the agency and member governments, and the needs assessment will address emerging issues and provide updated information on recent trends and long-term forecasts of housing needs. Staff will share the scope and timeline for development of the needs assessment for board discussion. The board will be asked for input on how the RHNA and related data resources can best support regional and local planning objectives through a focused update.

DISCUSSION

VISION 2050 directed PSRC to develop a regional housing strategy, including a regional housing needs assessment. Both documents were published in 2022 and have been critical to the agency's work to advance housing policy and work with housing partners regionwide. Ahead of the 2030 regional plan update, staff are proposing an update to the needs assessment, incorporating recent data, identifying emerging and anticipated trends, and highlighting opportunities for regional policy development.

Timeline and Scope
The RHNA Update is scheduled to complete by summer 2027 to provide time for incorporating findings into the regional plan update and policy development, with opportunities for additional input and guidance in winter and spring of 2027. Because of the abbreviated timeline, staff propose a narrower focus for the needs assessment, identifying regional-level trends and data, and using regional geographies to characterize differences between places, rather than exploring submarket distinctions. The topics receiving detailed attention, as described below, include areas where additional regional policy guidance may be necessary.

The following areas constitute the proposed needs assessment scope:

Establishing Existing Conditions
Supported by PSRC's ongoing housing monitoring work, the first section of the RHNA will describe the existing conditions of affordability and accessibility throughout the housing market. Documenting the existing challenges and market conditions will establish a baseline understanding of housing needs through which to view future needs.

Housing Development Trends
The second component of the needs assessment highlights our current trajectory by analyzing the types and locations of recent housing development using PSRC's assessor-based housing development estimates. This analysis will shed light on our current development and regulatory climate and may provide insight into alignment with housing goals.

Projecting Need to 2060
Working with the Regional Growth Strategy team, the RHNA will incorporate an overall housing target for the region and forecast housing needs by income band, recognizing trends in demographics and income that will impact housing needs. In addition, the needs assessment will estimate funding needed to support the development and operation of housing affordable to all income levels, including housing with supportive services.

Additional Exploratory Topics
Through analysis of recent and forecasted trends, as well as outreach and priorities from local work, the needs assessment will deepen our understanding of housing needs for critical pieces of our housing ecosystem. Staff are exploring the feasibility of including elements to address housing for families and larger households, ownership housing in dense, urban areas, and income-restricted housing at risk of losing affordability.

NEXT STEPS

Research and data collection for the RHNA is underway, and staff will return to the Growth Management Policy Board in January with a progress update to share initial findings.

For additional information, please contact David Dixon, Associate Planner, at ddixon@psrc.org or 206-464-6172.

Puget Sound Regional Council

September 10, 2026

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Growth Management Policy Board

From: Paul Inghram, Director of Growth Management

Subject: **Update Options for the Regional Centers Framework**

IN BRIEF

With regional growth center redesignation complete and the scope for Framework updates established, staff will present options for five growth center topics. The board will be asked to provide feedback on policy options to guide development of specific language for further review and adoption before the next new center application window opens in 2027.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Centers Framework, adopted by the Executive Board in 2018, provides direction and criteria for regional growth centers (RGCs) and manufacturing/industrial centers (MICs). The recent regional centers redesignation and monitoring process provided an opportunity to assess how well the current criteria and policies are working and identify where limited updates may be needed. In July 2026, the Growth Management Policy Board endorsed moving forward with a scope of updates for the Framework.

At this meeting, staff will report on recent feedback from the Regional Staff Committee and present options for five regional growth center topics. Staff are seeking feedback on these options to identify areas for further development. This input will help refine policy options and develop language recommendations for the Growth Management Policy Board later this year, ahead of recommendations to the Executive Board and completion of the Framework update in 2027.

The schedule for upcoming GMPB review includes:

- **September 2026**: Review and provide initial feedback on regional growth center policy topics (density, housing, boundaries, exception policy, and livable communities)

- **October 2026:** Review and provide initial feedback on manufacturing industrial centers topics (shifts in economic demand, core industrial, and community impacts)
- **November 2026:** Review draft amendment text, administrative updates, and proposed subarea checklist updates based on Equity Advisory Committee review
- **December 2026:** Continue review of amendment text (*as needed*)

Following board direction, staff have developed policy options for the identified topics attached and will continue to bring information and opportunities for input to the board. Recently, staff heard from the Regional Staff Committee (RSC), whose feedback will help inform the work along with ongoing communication with other boards, committees, and countywide planning groups.

Topic 1: Density Criteria / State TOD Bill

Summary: The attached memo reviews the relationship between the Regional Centers Framework's existing activity unit (AU) density measures and the new state requirements under HB 1491, which establish minimum densities based on floor area ratio (FAR). The analysis reflects that the two approaches are fundamentally consistent, but measure density in different ways. RGCs generally have higher planned FAR around high-capacity transit stations than areas outside centers, although some centers face challenges in achieving the Framework's minimum 45 AU per acre planned-density target within the current planning period.

Options include:

- Whether to continue using activity units as a planned growth measure
- Establish a minimum FAR standard for all centers
- Align the Framework's transit definition with HB 1491
- Reconsider how planned growth targets are established for metro growth centers. In particular, the 85 AU per acre standard for metro growth centers may warrant further review given that most metro centers already meet or exceed the target and there is significant variation in density across centers.

Discussion questions: What changes should be considered to the Framework's AU and/or additional FAR density requirements in light of HB 1491? What additional information is needed?

Topic 2: Housing Affordability

Summary: The attached memo reviews how the Regional Centers Framework addresses housing affordability and whether updates are needed to reflect changes to state housing planning requirements, particularly HB 1220. While the current Framework and Consistency Tool address housing needs, affordability, displacement, and fair housing, the 2025–2026 redesignation review found that many center plans provide limited detail on housing affordability and how housing goals will be achieved. This is particularly relevant given the regional goal of focusing growth in centers and the finding that 25% of regional housing growth from 2010–2023 occurred in centers.

Generally, the Framework provides a strong foundation, and minor updates and additional guidance could improve implementation without changing the overall policy direction. Options include:

- Documenting housing capacity in centers
- Identifying affordable housing tools and programs for centers

Discussion questions: What additional housing information should center plans be expected to provide? Are there specific affordable housing strategies or implementation commitments that PSRC should consider requiring or provide support to address?

Topic 3: Boundaries & Connectivity

Summary: The attached memo reviews the standards for boundaries and connectivity. The 2025 redesignation review identified seven of 30 regional growth centers with boundary concerns. Five involved pedestrian connectivity and transit access, while two involved center size. The review highlighted a gap in the current Framework: new centers must meet standards for shape and size, while existing centers are not clearly required to justify their boundaries or demonstrate connectivity unless they make a major boundary change. Options include:

- Establish criteria for boundaries based on walkability and transit access, rather than size and shape alone
- Demonstrate that a percentage of the center area is within a ½-mile network walk of high-capacity transit
- Demonstrate that a percentage of the center area is within a ½-mile walk of frequent bus service

Discussion questions: Should connectivity and transit access be explicit criteria for evaluating center boundaries?

- Is a ½-mile network walking distance an appropriate standard? Should it be higher or lower?
- How should the framework address barriers such as highways and major arterials?
- How should the criteria address corridors, particularly along BRT routes?

Topic 4: Boundary Exception Policy

Summary: The redesignation process highlighted several existing regional growth centers with boundary issues related to size, shape, or connectivity. Seven centers were redesignated with conditions to review and justify existing boundaries. Kirkland's

Totem Lake center received an exception to the boundary size review. The board directed staff to develop a process for evaluating future exceptions to avoid addressing them on a case-by-case basis.

The proposed administrative amendment would provide an exception process for boundary size and shape, considered based on overall center performance. Under the approach, an existing center would need to meet all other applicable criteria, be growing in alignment with or exceeding its growth targets and have a relatively low share of drive-alone trips. The intent is to provide flexibility for centers that are performing well and advancing regional objectives while maintaining the Framework's intent and expectations for future consistency.

Discussion questions: If an existing center does not meet the shape and size criteria, does the proposal provide a clear standard for an exception request?

Topic 5: Livable Communities

Summary: The purpose of this review is to evaluate criteria and planning requirements to encourage amenities or programs that foster a sense of place and livable, complete communities. The Framework includes requiring investment in livability and walkability but provides limited direction on how centers should demonstrate progress. Existing centers use a range of approaches, including urban design, transportation investments, parks, public programming, and placemaking. Options include:

- Develop criteria for livability and sense of place
- Additional guidance and examples for planning for livability
- Potential tools include community asset maps/inventories, sense-of-place criteria, guidance on placemaking and place keeping, and community-based organization input. The intent would be to create more consistent expectations while allowing jurisdictions flexibility to respond to local conditions.

Discussion questions:

- Should the Framework provide specific criteria for livability and sense of place?
- Should centers be expected to identify and map community assets such as parks, cultural organizations, schools, childcare, and small businesses? If so, should it be required in their subarea plan and/or checklist?
- How can the Framework encourage complete communities while recognizing different local contexts?

NEXT STEPS

The Growth Management Policy Board will be asked to discuss these topics, and additional topics related to manufacturing/industrial centers (MICs) at upcoming board meetings. Boards and committees will continue to discuss the Regional Centers Framework throughout the fall.

For additional information, please contact Paul Inghram, Director Growth Management at Pinghram@psrc.org 206-464-7549, or Nancy Ferber, Senior Planner at Nferber@psrc.org 206-464-6179.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Density Criteria & State TOD Bill
B. Housing Affordability Policy
C. Boundaries and Connectivity
D. Boundary Exception Policy
E. Livable Communities

Density Criteria& State TOD Bill

Background

The state recently passed HB 1491, commonly referred to as the TOD Bill. HB 1491 includes standards and measures for development intensity. This memo covers the relationship between PSRC's regional growth center density requirements and HB 1491, growth targets for metro growth centers, and the definition of transit service required for regional growth centers.

What does the Regional Centers Framework currently require?

The Regional Centers Framework establishes density requirements that combine population and employment. This measure is called "activity units" or "people per acre."

Regional centers are required to meet minimum existing densities. These are established as 18 activity units per acre for urban growth centers and 30 activity units per acre for metro growth centers.

Regional centers are also required to establish growth targets that meet minimum planned densities. These growth targets should establish a 20-year planning goal for the regional center through a comprehensive plan or subarea plan process. Minimum planned densities are 45 activity units per acre for urban growth centers and 85 activity units per acre for metro growth centers.

> **Terminology**
>
> **Activity units per acre**. Also called "people per acre," measures the average number of residents and employees per acre. This is a density measure used by PSRC for regional growth centers.
>
> **Floor area ratio**. Ratio of a building's total floor area to the size of the parcel. This zoning density measure is used in HB 1491 (state TOD bill).

Jurisdictions must provide at least sufficient zoned development capacity to accommodate these 20-year targets. The zoned capacity should exceed the targets to provide flexibility for the type, location, and timing of actual development.

This particular method of calculating growth and density is only required by PSRC for regional centers and is not required through other Growth Management Act requirements.

What has changed that has prompted review of this topic?

HB 1491 was passed by the legislature in 2025, creating new requirements for density and affordable housing incentives near high-capacity transit. The bill requires minimum densities based on floor area ratio. Floor area ratio (FAR) is a zoning measure that establishes density for commercial and residential uses.

Many regional centers have high-capacity transit stations, including bus rapid transit, that will be subject to the requirements of HB 1491. In the central Puget Sound, about 35% of all high-capacity transit stations subject to the bill are in regional growth centers.

The bill requires density of 3.5 FAR within 0.5 miles of rail transit stops and 2.5 FAR within 0.25 miles of bus rapid transit stops. Depending on lot coverage and other site characteristics, building height will vary, but 3.5 FAR is commonly about 6-10 stories for an average urban parcel size, while 2.5 FAR is approximately 4-7 stories.

Jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region will be required to implement HB 1491 by December 2029. More information on the bill is available from the Washington State Department of Commerce.

How are jurisdictions currently meeting requirements?

All centers have adopted activity unit growth targets, as documented in the regional growth center redesignation process.

While many jurisdictions have not yet formally adopted regulations to comply with HB 1491, station areas in regional centers are more likely to already have already met the required minimum zoned density than station areas outside of centers. A PSRC analysis of density found the average planned density of high-capacity transit stations in regional growth centers to be 5.9 FAR. The average density of stations outside of regional growth centers is approximately 2.2 FAR.

Beyond walkable areas around high-capacity transit stations, the following chart provides estimates of average zoned FAR density across the full extent of each regional growth center.

Center Name	Average Zoned Floor Area Ratio
Seattle Downtown	14.5
Redmond-Overlake	12.3
Tacoma Downtown	10.4
Federal Way	10.0
Seattle South Lake Union	7.8
Redmond Downtown	7.6
Everett	6.5
Tacoma Mall	6.0
Bellevue	5.7
Seattle Uptown	5.7
Issaquah	5.6
Lynnwood	5.5
Tukwila	5.0
Renton	5.0
Lakewood	4.5
Burien	4.4
Seattle Northgate	4.4
Silverdale	4.1
Auburn	4.1
Seattle University District	4.0
Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill	4.0
Kent	3.7
Bremerton	3.7
University Place	3.6
Bothell Canyon Park	3.4
Puyallup South Hill	3.2
SeaTac	2.7
Kirkland Totem Lake	2.3
Puyallup Downtown	2.2
Greater Downtown Kirkland	2.1

3.5 minimum FAR required for rail stations

2.5 minimum FAR required for BRT stations

Source: PSRC 2026 Future Land Use estimates

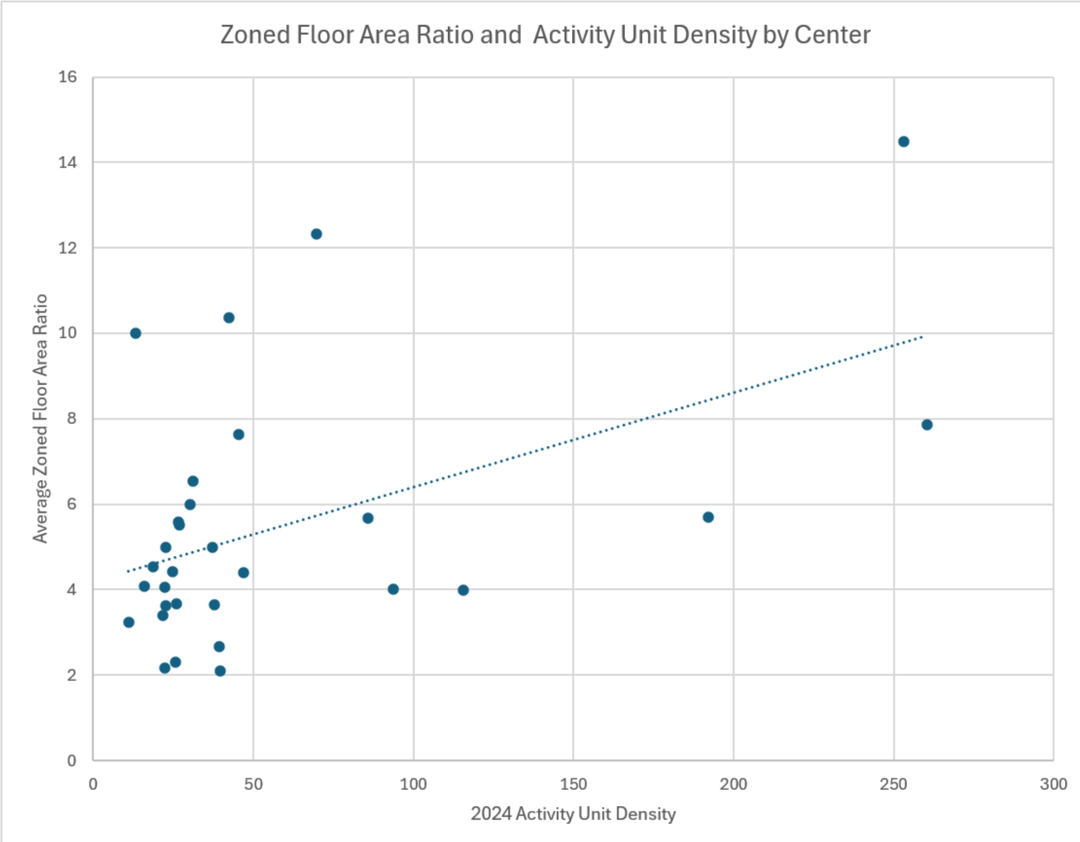
Not all regional growth centers will be required to meet HB 1491 requirements because they do not meet the bill's definition of high-capacity transit.

What does research or data indicate about current conditions or opportunities for improvement?

This analysis considers both zoned FAR density and the density of buildings on the ground today in the context of regional growth center density requirements.

Relationship between Zoned Floor Area Ratio Density and Current Activity Units

Activity units are used to establish planned growth targets for a 20-year planning period. Zoned development capacity must exceed targets to provide sufficient opportunities for actual market conditions within the center. Some expected patterns emerge when comparing current density and zoned FAR capacity. Metro growth centers with the highest current density generally allow the highest zoned FAR density. Many centers allow significantly higher density than reflected in their current estimates of population and employment.



Allowed zoned FAR density varies significantly for centers with fewer jobs and residents. Focusing on regional growth centers that are close to the density of 45 activity units per acre, these centers vary from 2.1 to 10.4 average zoned FAR density.

Center Name	2024 Activity Units Per Acre	Average Zoned Floor Area Ratio
Tacoma Downtown	42.4	10.4
Seattle Northgate	46.9	4.4
Redmond Downtown	45.4	7.6
Greater Downtown Kirkland	39.7	2.1
SeaTac	39.3	2.7

Centers at the lowest end of allowed FAR density represent a mix of centers that have added recent growth and meet PSRC center requirements (Kirkland Totem Lake, Greater Downtown Kirkland, Puyallup Downtown and SeaTac), alongside centers below PSRC requirements for existing density (Puyallup South Hill).

The data shows that they are different measurement standards. Many regional centers are likely to have met the FAR zoning requirements in HB 1491.

Conversion between Activity Unit Density and Floor Area Ratio

PSRC analyzed the estimated FAR of current development on the ground in centers. These are estimates based on county Assessor data and other information from PSRC's land use model. This FAR density data was then compared to current activity unit density in centers. This shows how much actual built density, as measured in FAR, is necessary to reach regional growth center density goals.

Centers Policy Goal	Centers Density Goal	Predicted Average Floor Area Ratio
Minimum required **current** density for **urban** growth centers	18 activity units per acre	0.29
Minimum required **current** density for **metro** growth centers	30 activity units per acre	0.57
Minimum required **planned** density for **urban** growth centers	45 activity units per acre	0.93
Minimum required **planned** density for **metro** growth centers	85 activity units per acre	1.88

HB 1491 TOD Policy Goal	TOD Density Goal	Predicted Activity Unit Density
Minimum required floor area ratio for **bus rapid transit stops**	2.5 average floor area ratio	111 activity units per acre
Minimum required floor area ratio for **rail stops**	3.5 average floor area ratio	154 activity units per acre

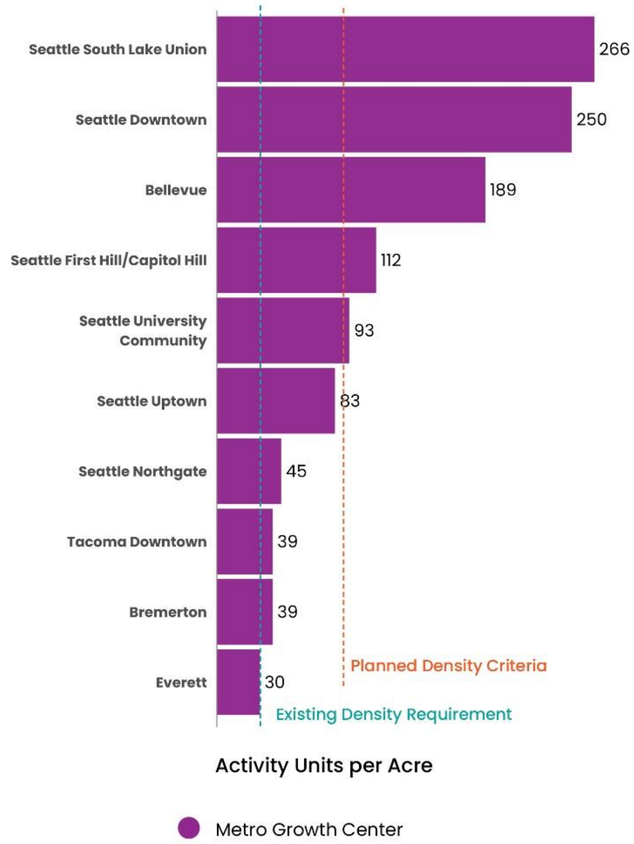
This analysis indicates that building to the minimum densities in the TOD bill would significantly exceed PSRC's regional growth center goals.

Planned Density in Metro Growth Centers

PSRC's activity unit goals for metro growth centers warrant additional review. Of the nine metro growth centers, five centers already exceed the planned density requirement, and one additional center is very close. The current planned density standard represents a meaningful planning goal for three centers (Downtown Tacoma, Bremerton, and Everett).

Based on regional policy in VISION 2050, regional growth centers should be planning for significant future growth. The density goals in the Regional Centers Framework are intended to provide a standardized, ambitious goal for future growth. Since the threshold of 85 activity units per acre was established in 2018, metro growth centers have continued to grow substantially. There is significant variation between the densest metro growth center (South Lake Union at 266 activity units per acre) and the least dense metro growth center (Everett at 30 activity units per acre).

Metro Growth Centers: Existing Activity Units per Acre



Source: Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program: 2023; PSRC Parcel Estimates

A minimum percentage growth goal could be considered for centers that have already achieved 85 activity units per acre.

Definition of High-Capacity or Frequent Transit

Both HB 1491 and the Regional Centers Framework include a minimum standard for high-capacity transit. In the case of HB 1491, the purpose of the definition of high-capacity transit is to identify areas subject the zoned density requirements under the bill. For the Regional Centers Framework, the purpose is to designate regional growth centers that have sufficient transit to support long-term growth. The transit definitions are similar but different in important ways.

The transit definition in the Regional Centers Framework includes any planned high-capacity transit stop, not only those under construction or explicitly funded. The transit requirement also includes an option to provide frequent bus service for centers that may not have planned high-capacity transit service.

HB 1491 provides a definition of transit that is mode-specific and does not include a standard of frequence. The modal definition includes “fixed guideway systems,” which includes Seattle’s trolley bus network but does not include ferries. The TOD bill only includes bus rapid transit stops under construction or any bus rapid transit service funded by Sound Transit. This is a narrower definition of qualifying bus rapid transit than provided in the Regional Centers Framework.

If the regional growth center standards were updated to match HB 1491, some centers would not have service that meets the minimum transit criteria. Those centers include Bremerton and Silverdale in Kitsap County and Lakewood, Puyallup South Hill, Tacoma Mall, and University Place in Pierce County.

What are the policy options to address this topic? Is an amendment to the Regional Centers Framework needed to address this topic?

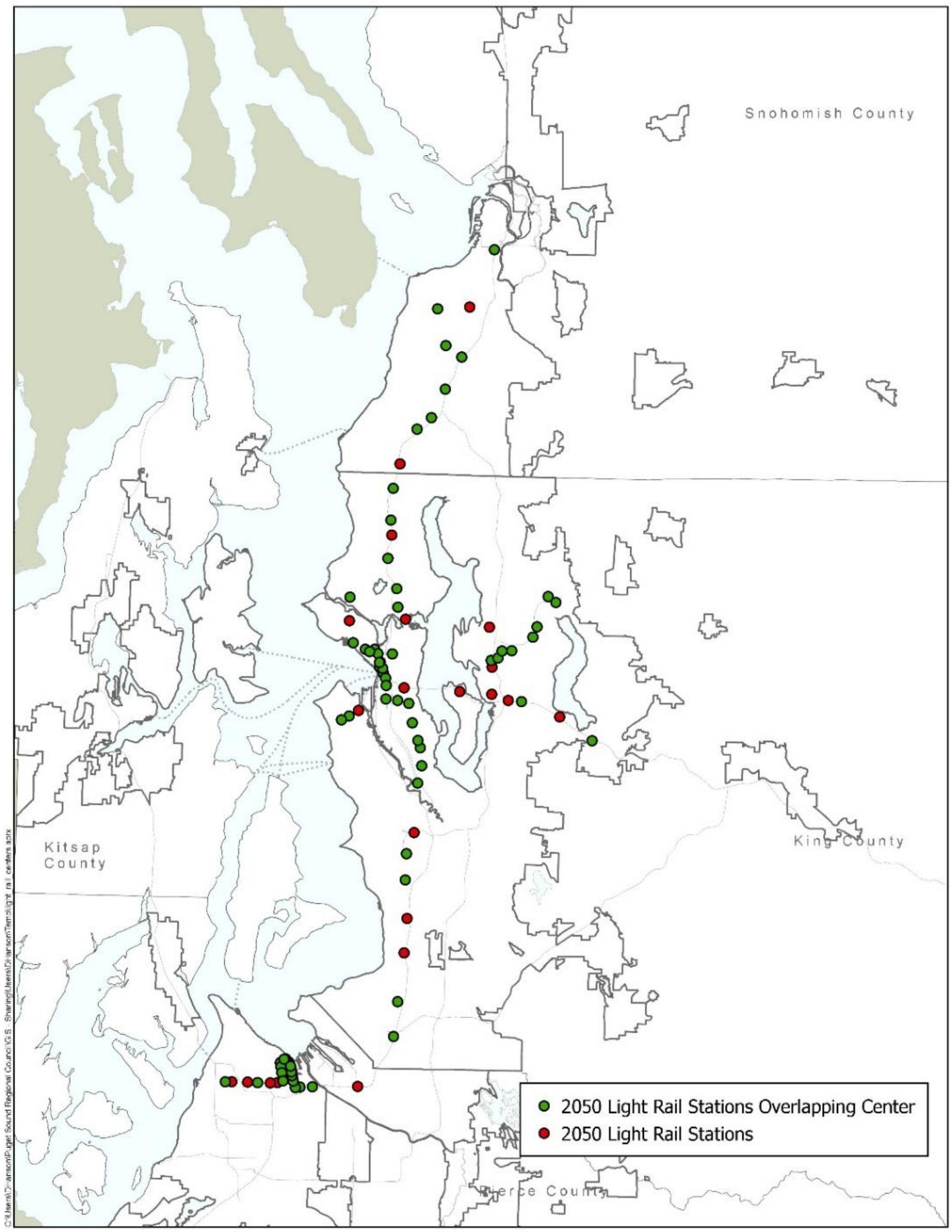
HB 1491 FAR and center targets are not fundamentally inconsistent, but they do measure different things. Most centers already have higher average FAR prior to the compliance deadline. If a center is already consistent with HB 1491, the jurisdiction may not seek changes to its subarea plan or codes. If a center must be rezoned to comply with HB 1491, it raises the possibility that the jurisdiction may seek to update its plan and code to use standards and terminology consistent with HB 1491.

Options	Issue this would address	Challenges with this option
Eliminate requirements for planned activity unit density in centers in favor of a measure of floor area ratio.	Reduce potential confusion between two different types of density measures for regional centers	This option would require additional research on appropriate FAR to support planned growth in centers
Increase required planned activity unit density	Align with higher densities required by the TOD bill	Several centers are challenged to meet the current density goals and may fall further behind if the activity unit requirements were increased
Require all centers to AT LEAST meet state minimum of 2.5 FAR	Ensure that centers, even those that are not subject to HB 1491, are more closely aligned with planned density in other regional centers	Current market demand may not support development at higher zoned density in some centers
Update minimum transit definition in the Regional	Centers that are not required to rezone based	Changes to the transit definition would affect

Centers Framework to align with HB 1491	in HB 1491 keep pace with other centers in providing density	centers in Kitsap and Pierce counties, which do not currently have funded bus rapid transit
Metro growth center growth targets above 85 AU/acre could be a minimum percentage increase instead of a fixed total	Most metro growth centers have significantly exceeded the minimum required growth target. Metro growth centers should still be expected to plan for ambitious growth.	Additional research would be required to determine a minimum percentage of planned growth

Appendix A: Relationship between light rail stations and center designation

The vast majority of existing and planned light rail stations are located in regional or countywide centers. A small number are directly outside of designated centers. While the region has goals to support long-term growth in light rail stations, many stations located in countywide growth centers or outside of centers don't meet the requirements for regional centers today given they lack density and an adopted subarea plan.



Housing Affordability Policy

Background

The Regional Centers Framework recognizes the importance of housing in mixed-use centers, including consideration of housing needs and affordable housing strategies. Over the last few years, state legislation has since amended the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) to strengthen local requirements for planning for housing affordable to all income levels, most notably through HB 1220.

The Framework may need to be updated to reflect these changes and strengthen the role of regional centers in supporting local and regional housing goals. Below are options for updating the Framework to encourage affordable housing opportunities.

What does the Regional Centers Framework currently require?

The Regional Centers Framework addresses housing requirements under the planning criteria, indicating that a center plan should include an assessment of housing need, including displacement risk, as well as documentation of tools, programs, or commitment to provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes and strategies to further fair housing.

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans (PDF) provides guidance for alignment with VISION 2050, calling for subarea plans to address the following:

- 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 to ensure housing for all major income categories are allowed
- Demonstrate how housing targets and goals will be met
- 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

How are jurisdictions currently meeting requirements?

The 2025-2026 centers redesignation review confirmed that the local subarea plans met the general criteria of planning for housing as outlined in the consistency tool, but many certification reports include recommendations for further work on housing, especially related to implementation and encouragement of affordable housing. This mirrors PSRC’s comments on comprehensive plans and reflects the regionwide shortfall in meeting affordable housing needs.

VISION 2050 sets a goal for 65% of population growth to be located in regional growth centers and near high-capacity transit. PSRC's 2025 Regional Centers System Monitoring Report found that centers have the capacity to accommodate roughly 27% of planned population growth, and the remaining 38% could be accommodated in other high-capacity transit areas. However, only 25% of the region's housing growth from 2010 to 2023 has been in centers.

While many jurisdictions have established overall housing targets for their centers in line with the framework requirements, few include a deeper needs assessment or data analysis of housing affordability that is specific to the center. Many also include policies in their subarea plans to consider or even implement strategies to produce income-restricted housing. *Nearly all local subarea plans fall short of documenting the tools, programs, and commitment to provide affordable housing choices or demonstrate how housing targets will be met.*

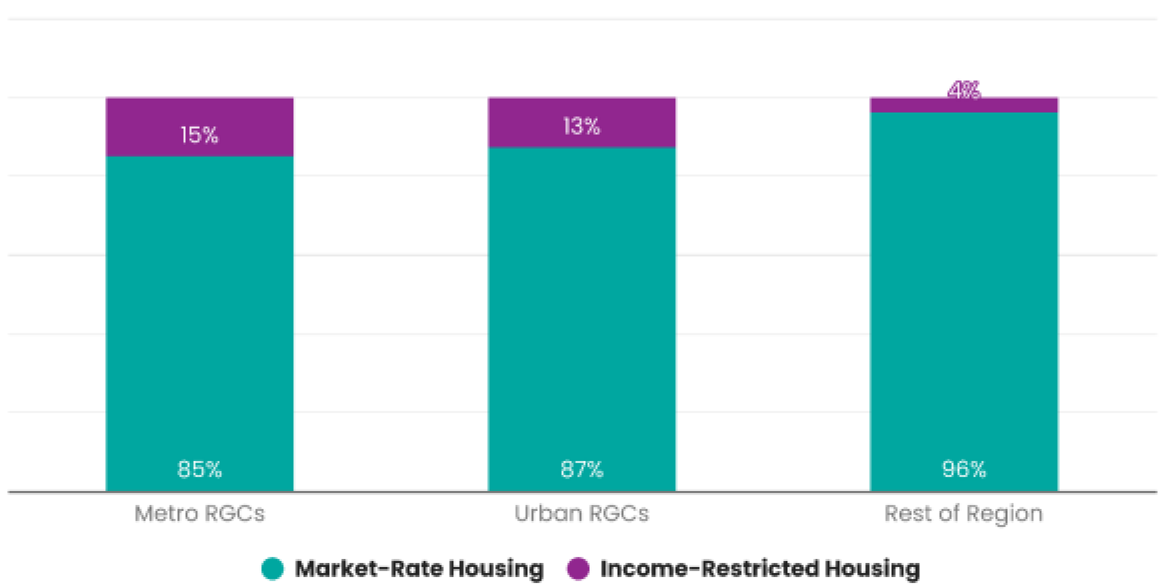
What has changed that has prompted review of this topic?
Recent state legislation updated the local planning framework for affordable housing, which jurisdictions addressed through their updates to comprehensive plans. House Bill 1220, passed in 2021, revised the Growth Management Act to direct jurisdictions to "plan for and accommodate" housing affordable to all income levels. Guidance for Complying with HB 1220 requirements indicates that affordable housing is most likely to develop in areas with low- or mid-rise multifamily zoning. Through the comprehensive plan update, jurisdictions documented their capacity for housing growth by zoning category and demonstrated compliance with their assigned growth targets by ensuring that they had sufficient zoned capacity for denser, multifamily housing.

Exhibit 13. Example of relating zone categories to housing types and income levels served in higher-cost communities

Zone category	Typical housing types allowed	Lowest potential income level served		Assumed affordability level for capacity analysis
		Market rate	With subsidies and/or incentives	
Low Density	Detached single family homes	Higher income (>120% AMI)	Not feasible at scale*	**Higher income (>120% AMI)**
Moderate Density	Townhomes, duplex, triplex, quadplex	Higher income (>120% AMI)	Not typically feasible at scale*	**Higher income (>120% AMI)**
Low-Rise Multifamily	Walk-up apartments, condominiums (2-3-floors)	Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)	Extremely low, very low, and low-income (0-80% AMI)	**Low income (0-80% AMI) and PSH**
Mid-Rise Multifamily	Apartments, condominiums	Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)	Extremely low, very low, and low-income (0-80% AMI)	**Low income (0-80% AMI) and PSH**
High-Rise/Tower	Apartments, condominiums	Higher income (>120% AMI)	Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)	**Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)**
ADUs (all zones)	ADUs on developed residential lots	Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)	N/A	**Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)**

Many center subarea plans were developed and adopted prior to the passage of HB 1220 and lack the level of analysis around housing type and affordability expected in comprehensive plans. Centers are dominated by zoning for the housing types that are most likely to be affordable. The 2025 monitoring report showed that while the average rent across all regional growth centers is higher than the region's average rent, there are many centers where rents are lower than the regional average. Jurisdictions with centers should use the tools at their disposal to ensure that both new and existing housing units contribute to the need for affordable housing. The monitoring report showed that centers are home to a larger proportion of income-restricted units than the rest of the region, indicating that affordable housing is being provided in centers.

Figure 34 – Share of Income-Restricted Housing by Regional Growth Center Type



Source: PSRC Income Restricted Housing Database: 2021; King County Income-Restricted Housing Database: 2021, OFM Small Area Estimates Program: 2021

What are the options to address this topic?
The Regional Centers Framework addresses the issues of housing affordability in its existing form, through both the framework document and the Consistency Tool. Minor changes and example guidance to clarify required elements related to housing affordability could be provided without changing the policy direction.

Options	Issues this would address	Notes
Require center plans to indicate zoned development capacity for housing by zone category	Alignment with HB 1220 and recent plan updates, supporting goals for affordable housing production	Likely requires additional staff time and resources
Require additional detail on tools and programs supporting affordable housing in center plans or application materials	Alignment with HB 1220 and recent plan updates, supporting goals for affordable housing production	May reference work from local plans on adequate provisions for affordable housing
Require additional detail in center plans or application materials to demonstrate how housing targets and goals will be met	Ambiguity in existing framework language	Requires additional guidance from PSRC staff to establish how jurisdictions should demonstrate their intended pathway to meeting housing goals

Conclusion

Ensuring that centers contribute to regional affordable housing needs is essential to achieving broader regional goals related to increasing housing access in areas of opportunity. Due to the dense housing types that are disproportionately located in regional centers, housing development in centers plays an outsize role in meeting affordable housing needs.

In line with comprehensive planning requirements to plan for and accommodate housing for all income levels, updates to the center plan consistency tool would support a critical implementation strategy for jurisdictions to meet their housing needs in locations of dense housing and opportunity.

Boundaries and Connectivity

Background

The Regional Centers Framework describes centers as areas of compact, pedestrian-oriented development that provide access and mobility for people walking, biking, and using transit. Many existing centers struggle to meet the goals set out for regional centers due to irregular shapes, large sizes, and barriers to connectivity created by major roadways or superblocks. While the framework includes language to guide existing and prospective centers towards shape, size, and connectivity goals, the criteria lack objective standards. The 2025 redesignation review of existing centers identified seven regional growth centers with issues related to shape, size and connectivity and placed a condition on these centers that required jurisdictions to review their center boundaries and submit for board approval. This memo outlines options for updating the framework and accompanying documents to ensure that the boundaries of and connectivity within existing and future regional centers meet the intent of the centers framework.

What does the Regional Centers Framework currently require?

The intent of regional growth centers is to be compact, transit-supported areas for growth and development. The maximum size criterion for regional growth centers is 640 acres, equivalent to one square mile. This creates a hypothetical ideal center that is a square, one mile on each side with a transit station in the middle, where one can walk from the transit station to the edge of the center in a half mile.

The framework suggests this type of orientation, recommending that centers be nodal with a generally round or square shape and avoid linear or gerrymandered shapes that are not readily walkable or connected by transit. Further, the criteria require a justification of size and shape, though do not specify how to do this.

The framework allows for centers larger than 640 acres, if they have an internal, high-capacity transit system, which includes a streetcar or multiple light rail stations. However, the framework does not create any additional conditions for oversized centers or establish a maximum size once the exception is satisfied. For instance, at 1,385 acres, the Downtown Tacoma center is over twice the maximum size criterion.

While the eligibility criteria do not directly address superblocks or major roadways as connectivity barriers, they do require that centers should have existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, amenities, and a street pattern that support walkability.

What has changed that has prompted review of this topic?
In the 2025 redesignation review of existing regional centers, seven centers were redesignated with conditions related to boundaries and connectivity. These conditions allowed the centers to maintain their designated status while addressing identified boundary and connectivity issues through a future resubmittal for approval.

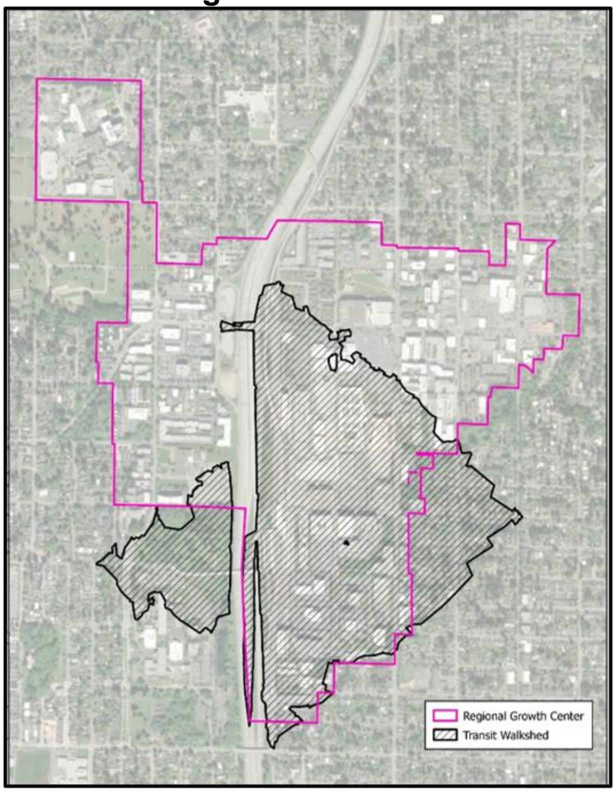
The specifics of the boundary conditions differ slightly across the centers, due to differences in center geographies, but fall into two categories. Five of the seven conditions call out pedestrian connectivity, which aligns with the overall intent of the centers framework. In addition, most of these conditions reference walking access to transit as part of the boundary condition. The remaining two boundary conditions relate to the size of the centers, which are larger than the maximum permitted for centers without an internal high-capacity transit system.

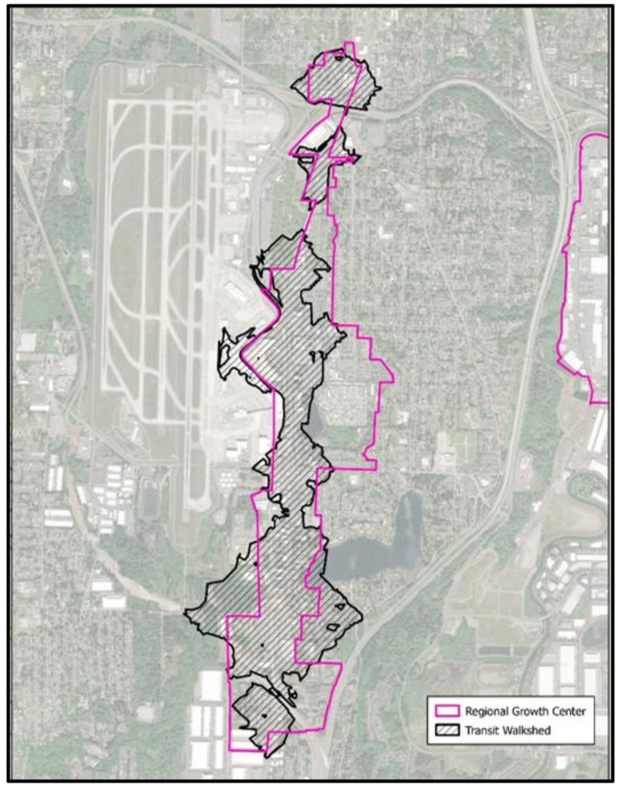
The questions of shape and connectivity are distinct from that of size. While all three topics relate to the geographic boundaries of the center, a large size does not necessarily imply a lack of internal pedestrian connectivity or an impractical shape. In fact, the two centers which have boundary conditions related to their size have shapes that otherwise would be unlikely to draw concern.

An additional challenge to connectivity in these conditions is the issue of pedestrian mobility across interstates and major arterials. For many of the centers with boundary conditions, pedestrian connectivity throughout the center is inhibited by the presence of a high traffic roadway. While proximity to an interstate highway or other major roadway may be a reason for the concentration of housing and employment, VISION 2050 goals and policies seek to address barriers to multimodal users and support the development of complete communities.

As illustrated in Figure 1, connectivity throughout the Seattle Northgate center is inhibited by the presence of Interstate 5, isolating the west and northwest portions of the center and limiting their ability to function as a single subarea. Figure 2 shows the SeaTac center, which is linear in shape and extends across nearly four miles, creating a similar challenge for cohesive subarea planning. The presence of superblocks has not been documented across regional centers, but an illustrative example is the Tukwila center, which has at its heart a superblock measuring 1600 by 1000 feet.

Figures 1 and 2: Regional Growth Center Boundaries and Transit Walksheds, Seattle Northgate and SeaTac





What does research or data indicate about current conditions or opportunities for improvement?

Many peer agencies that designate centers do not have firm criteria on size or shape of centers, allowing for local decision making to drive the process for center boundaries. Many agencies allow and even encourage corridor-based centers, especially when supported by transit. Nearly all peer agencies have centers with major roadways, including interstate highways, and none were identified with guidance to avoid or mitigate the connectivity impacts related to the roadways.

Connecting center shape to transit access may be an effective way to manage size, shape, and connectivity. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) designates two types of Priority Development Areas (PDAs), which function similar to centers:

- Transit-Rich PDAs are areas around a high-capacity transit station
- Connected Community PDAs have existing density and offer basic transit service with planned housing and job growth and policies to reduce VMT

The shape and size of PDAs relate directly to the availability of transit service within the area. Transit Rich PDAs must have at least 50% of area within ½ mile of a high-capacity transit stop like rail, ferry, or frequent bus. Connected Community PDAs must have the entire area within ½ mile of a bus stop with peak service of 30 minutes or less.

Transit-rich PDAs are similar to regional growth centers. The centers framework could apply a similar standard to regional growth centers, requiring that a certain percentage of the center area be within walking distance of high-capacity transit. Using ½-mile walk distance for light rail stations and ¼-mile walk distance for BRT stations, we find that 19 of the 30 regional growth centers have at least half of their area within walking distance of a high-capacity transit station. Table 1 lists the regional growth centers and the percentage of their acreage within the walkshed of existing or planned high-capacity transit. The metric ranges from 99% (Seattle South Lake Union) to 0% (Lakewood, Puyallup South Hill, Silverdale, and Tacoma Mall).

Table 1: Regional Growth Centers by percentage of area within transit walkshed

Regional Growth Center	Total Acres	Acres of Walkshed in Center	% of Center in Walkshed
Seattle South Lake Union	360	358	99%
Seattle Uptown	333	313	94%
Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill	918	841	92%
Seattle Downtown	952	866	91%
Tacoma Downtown	1,385	1,237	89%
Bellevue	410	347	85%
Federal Way	219	174	79%
Kent	292	218	75%
Auburn	355	263	74%
Seattle University District	753	553	73%
Puyallup Downtown	215	149	69%
Greater Downtown Kirkland	564	386	68%
Burien	419	282	67%
Seattle Northgate	412	272	66%
SeaTac	885	541	61%
Redmond Downtown	509	298	59%
Renton	606	349	58%
Redmond-Overlake	863	464	54%
Tukwila	882	449	51%
Everett	661	301	46%
Lynnwood	776	330	43%
Kirkland Totem Lake	842	255	30%
Issaquah	466	132	28%
Bremerton	592	114	19%
University Place	481	59	12%
Bothell Canyon Park	563	60	11%

Lakewood	337	0	0%
Puyallup South Hill	845	0	0%
Silverdale	718	0	0%
Tacoma Mall	575	0	0%

What are the policy options to address this topic? Is an amendment to the Regional Centers Framework needed to address this topic?

Options	Issues this would address	Notes
Clarify how jurisdictions plan for center shape and size to support transit access	Ambiguity in framework requirement.	All jurisdictions should include at least some discussion in their subarea plan of how the boundary was determined.
Require centers to have a certain percentage of their area within walking distance of existing or planned high-capacity transit	Connectivity within centers, large centers, unusually shaped centers	In addition to the 640 acre maximum
Require centers to identify gaps in pedestrian connectivity and include projects to improve connectivity	Connectivity within centers, superblocks, major roadways	Use PSRC's Transit Access Tool – Urban Form and Connectivity metrics
Require new centers to exclude major roadway crossings and prohibit superblocks	Address superblocks, connectivity	

Conclusion

By clarifying the requirements for boundary justification and establishing objective criteria, jurisdictions will have a predictable pathway to designation and redesignation. The proposed framework updates will strengthen the process for managing centers and encourage planning for centers to optimize access to transit investments.

Boundary Exception Policy

Background

During the 2025–26 centers monitoring and redesignation review process the Growth Management Policy Board (GMPB) raised questions around boundary requirements and conditions of approval to address boundaries not yet meeting criteria.

Seven existing regional growth centers were approved for redesignation pending additional review of their boundary either related to shape, size, and connectivity. Recommending conditions as part of the redesignation process provided a structured and collaborative approach for addressing areas that needed additional time or targeted actions to fully meet boundary criteria. Conditions allow jurisdictions to maintain eligibility status while providing flexibility to complete identified improvements, such as refining boundaries, or providing justification for the boundary shape.

When Kirkland requested an exception to review their boundary size, the board approved the request and directed staff to develop an exception policy for boundary size and shape with the intent to establish a consistent process for evaluating future requests and avoid ad hoc decisions.

Purpose

This policy will establish a consistent approach for evaluating a boundary exception request for existing centers. The language aims to reduce the need for ad hoc decision-making by the board on individual cases. The policy is specifically intended to only address boundary shape and size considerations.

What does the Regional Centers Framework currently require?

Center size requirements help ensure that Regional Growth Centers (RGCs) are appropriately scaled to function as concentrated areas for growth. RGCs are limited to a size range to support compact development patterns while allowing flexibility for areas served by internal high-capacity transit, such as downtown Seattle. Urban Growth Centers must be between 200 and 640 acres, while Metro Growth Centers must be between 320 and 640 acres, with opportunities for larger boundaries when supported by qualifying transit systems.

Manufacturing/Industrial Centers have different size considerations also based on their function: Industrial Employment Centers have no minimum size requirement, while Industrial Growth Centers must be at least 2,000 acres to reflect their role as significant areas for industrial activity and growth.

Size Requirements

Regional Growth Centers	Manufacturing/Industrial Centers
Urban Growth Centers: Size: 200 acres minimum - 640 acres maximum (may be larger if served by an internal, high-capacity transit system)	**Industrial Employment** Size n/a
Metro Growth Centers Size: 320 acres minimum - 640 acres maximum (may be larger if served by an internal, high-capacity transit system)	**Industrial Growth Centers** Minimum: 2,000 acres

Shape Requirements
While not as explicitly defined in the Centers Framework, the following is required for new (and existing) RGCs:

Existing Conditions: Existing infrastructure and utilities sufficient to support new center growth, a mix of both existing housing and employment, ***justification of size and shape.*** *Recommended centers to be* ***nodal with a generally round or square shape and avoid linear or gerrymandered shapes that are not readily walkable or connected by transit****. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, amenities, and a street pattern that supports walkability*

How are jurisdictions currently meeting requirements?
Of the thirty existing regional growth centers, seven were recommended for recertification with conditions related to boundaries: Issaquah, Lynnwood, Renton, SeaTac, Northgate, Silverdale, and Tukwila. During the review process, Kirkland's Totem Lake center was also recommended for approval with a condition to review the boundary criteria, which was later granted an exception rather than a condition of approval.

Conditional Approvals
Conditions are a useful option in the review process to establish clear expectations, timelines, and pathways for addressing identified issues, support consistency, transparency, and ongoing coordination. Conditions of approval are developed collaboratively with jurisdiction and PSRC staff prior to Board review. Proactive recommendations of conditions provide an opportunity to address emerging issues before the center is at risk of losing designation status. In cases where existing boundaries did not fully meet criteria, conditions were recommended where there was a clear and feasible path forward.

What does research or data indicate about current conditions or opportunities for improvement?

PSRC's redesignation process in 2025-26 revealed several existing centers with boundary issues. These findings provided an opportunity to bring all the centers into compliance and consistency. The review process also allowed an opportunity to strengthen guidance on boundary shape, pedestrian connectivity, and alignment with transit station walksheds to ensure centers function as a cohesive area and node of activity rather than corridors or areas that are dispersed. This will be further addressed in Boundary and Connectivity policy overview.

The redesignation process demonstrated that conditions of approval are an effective tool for balancing consistency and flexibility. Rather than creating exceptions to the Regional Centers Framework, the GMPB approved several redesignations with conditions requiring jurisdictions to address identified issues such as boundary configuration, pedestrian connectivity, or planning updates, within a specified timeframe. This approach allowed centers to remain designated while reinforcing the expectation that they ultimately meet the Framework's intent. However, a one-off request for exemption from reviewing a boundary that did not meet criteria, was granted. GMPB simultaneously directed staff to develop an exception policy to avoid ad-hoc decisions in the future.

What are the options to address this topic?

In subsequent discussions, GMPB members reiterated the importance of considering overall center performance when evaluating exception requests. The intent is for regional centers to function as compact, walkable places where most destinations can be reached within approximately a 15-minute walk. Areas that are not well served by the center's primary transit investments may be less connected to the core, raising questions about whether they should be included within the boundary. If the center is functioning well overall, and advancing regional objectives, board members discussed some flexibility may be appropriate.

Proposed Policy:

The limited exception policy would be incorporated into the Administrative Procedures for Regional Centers, outlining the criteria and performance-based requirements for the board to consider an exception. The Regional Centers Framework will be updated to reference the exception policy in the Performance Measures and Implementation sections, while the Administrative Procedures will serve as the primary document governing how the policy is applied. Draft policy language proposed is:

> ***Boundary Exception.*** *A jurisdiction may request an exception to the review for the shape and size criteria for regional growth centers, which the Executive Board may grant when a center meets all other applicable criteria, and:*
> *a. Is growing in alignment with or exceeding its growth targets, and*
> *b. Has a relatively low share of drive-alone trips.*
>
> *Approved exceptions do not waive future consistency requirements.*

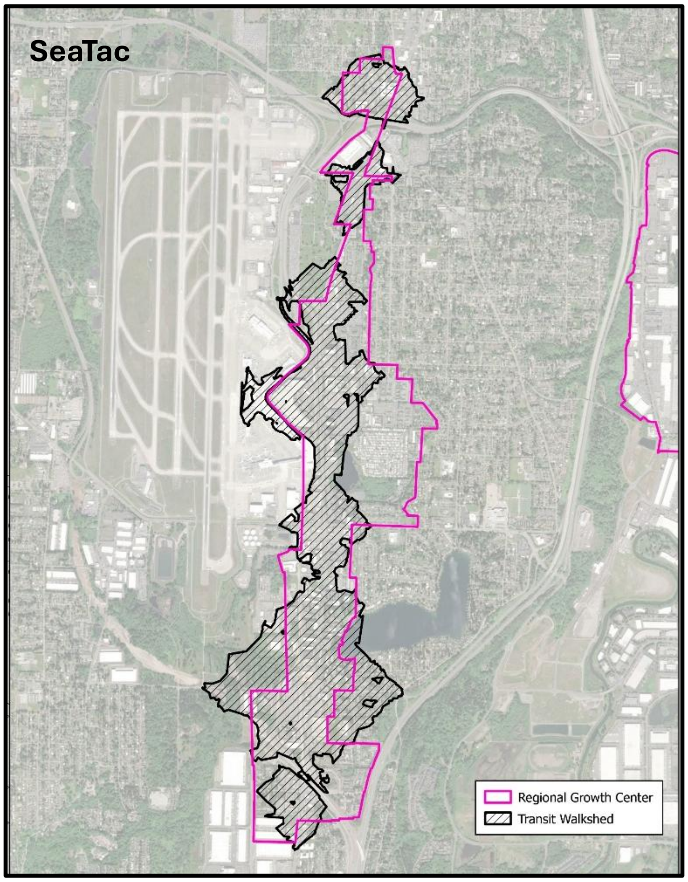
The proposed criteria for achieving growth in relation to targets, and a reduced dependence on auto-focused trips captures the elements of a successful center. However, remaining questions to address include:

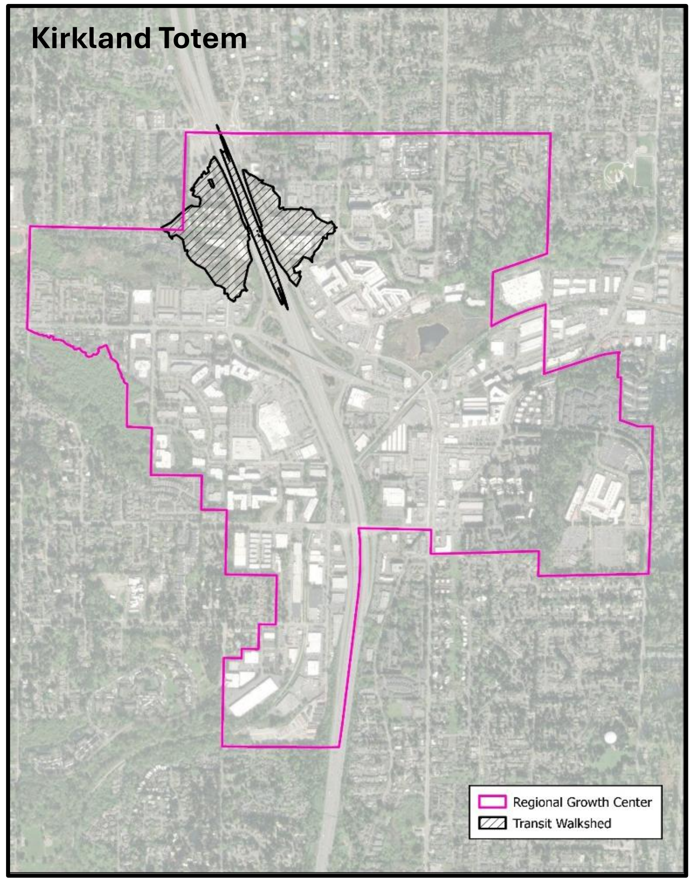
- As presented, does this language align with the board's direction to establish an exception policy for size and shape?
- Should other performance-based criteria be included?

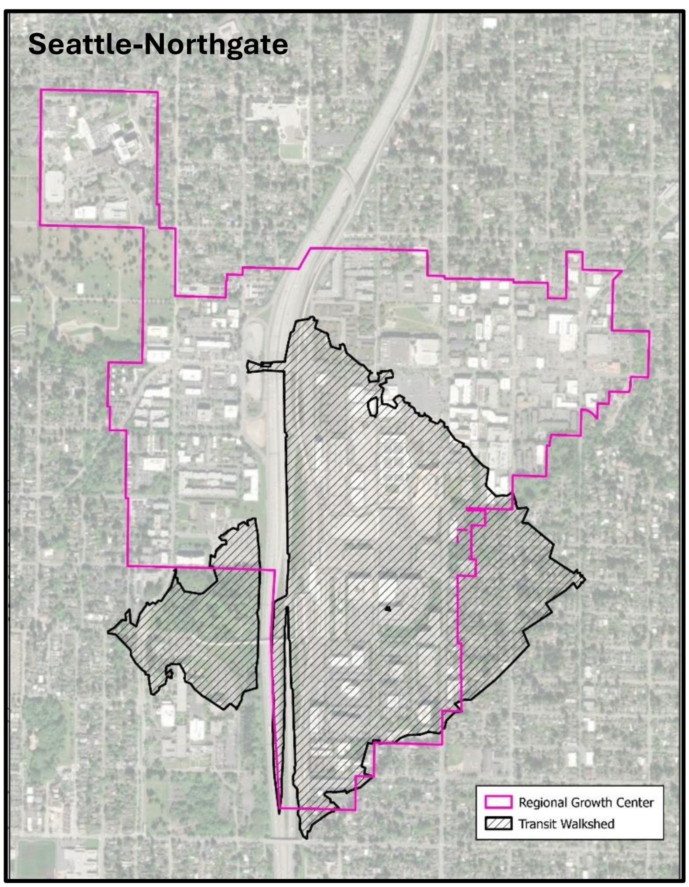
Appendix:

A. Walkshed Maps for Context

Appendix A: Example RGC Walkshed Maps:







As centers have evolved, some boundaries no longer align with pedestrian networks, transit walksheds, or the areas that function as walkable activity hubs. Center boundaries should be configured to support cohesive, walkable areas that connect residents, workers, and visitors to key destinations, including transit, housing, employment, and amenities.

Irregularly shaped boundaries and physical barriers, such as highways, can limit access to transit and reduce connectivity and walkability within the center. Boundary reviews and new center boundaries should consider opportunities to better align boundaries with pedestrian networks to reflect walkable areas.

Livable Communities

Background

VISION 2050 encourages future growth in regional growth centers that are intended to be dense, walkable, and mixed-use areas. One of the Regional Centers Framework criteria for centers is local investment to create a walkable, livable center. As the Puget Sound region considers its approach to growth while maintaining a high quality of life for all residents, investment in livable places that have room to grow is a major purpose of regional centers.

When reviewing regional centers, the Growth Management Policy Board has regularly emphasized the importance of supporting livability and a “sense of place,” ensuring that regional investments create complete communities. While the framework identifies livability as an objective for regional centers, evaluating how individual centers are working towards this goal is difficult without clear criteria. This memo outlines options for clarifying criteria and providing guidelines for supporting livability in centers.

What does the Regional Centers Framework currently require?

The Regional Centers Framework establishes similar eligibility and designation criteria for both existing and prospective regional growth centers that address topics related to livability and sense of place. The key areas where the topic is addressed include:

Local Commitment

The framework requires that centers document a history of and intent to continue investment in center livability and walkability. The consistency tool elaborates on this requirement as a “list of specific transportation investments and programs and other public infrastructure investments.”

Regional Role

The framework requires that centers have a clear regional role as an important destination for county and evidence of market potential to support the center’s planning target for jobs and population. The consistency tool does not provide additional detail on how a center’s regional role should be justified. While the regional significance of a place doesn’t necessarily connote livability, the significance of a neighborhood or destination may be strongly related to its identity or sense of place.

Land Use and Development Patterns

The consistency tool includes several items which are not described in the framework but provide detail on how subarea plans may incorporate policies to support livability into their center plans, including:

- Establish design standards for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development and other transit-supportive planning that orients land uses around transit. Eliminate superblocks through innovative site design and public/private partnerships.

- Increase access to opportunity, including employment and education opportunities and improved neighborhood quality of life.

How are jurisdictions currently meeting requirements?
Jurisdictions throughout the region conduct subarea planning to establish a vision for locally significant places within their community.
Existing center plans address livability through a variety of techniques. Many plans use urban design principles, such as architectural standards, branding, and wayfinding as the primary method of improving identity in centers. Others include lists of transportation investments either by reference or discussed proposed investments in the plan text. A small number of plans include discussion of other investments in the public realm, which may include parks, open space, and public programming.

With respect to sense of place, center plans also illustrate a mix of strategies, from simply stating that the downtown is a “primary urban center” (Bellevue Downtown), providing data on concentrations of employment and transportation connections (Bothell Canyon Park), or documenting key assets and community institutions (Auburn). For metro growth centers, often the central business districts of a major city, the regional role of the center is clear. Smaller urban growth centers may articulate a vision for a livable center and document concentration of employment or housing, but a clear identity for some centers is still being developed.

Some jurisdictions conduct placemaking efforts and support livability outside of the subarea planning process, often aligned with economic development projects. For instance, the city of SeaTac created a Tourism Destination Development Plan (PDF), which guided the city’s investment to launch pop-up beer gardens and watch parties during the 2026 FIFA World Cup as part of a broader placemaking effort. In Lynnwood, which has become a hub in Snohomish County as the current northern terminus of the Link light rail and provides access to new Community Transit BRT routes, the city has created a vision (PDF) supported by a marketing plan to emphasize how the city’s strategic investments in parks and multimodal infrastructure will create a walkable downtown for the city.

What has changed that has prompted review of this topic?
The Growth Management Policy Board and Regional Staff Committee members recommended sense of place and livability as an area for improvement as PSRC staff conduct a review of the Regional Centers Framework. Board and committee members recommended including criteria that encourage regional centers to be more than just jobs and housing and to encompass complete communities, with childcare facilities, parks, schools and other key amenities.

What does research or data indicate about current conditions or opportunities for improvement?
Examples from PSRC guidance documents, partner agencies, and other peer regions provide some strategies for improvement in encouraging livable places. PSRC’s guidance for Transportation Projects Supporting Growth in Centers (PDF) highlights

examples of how jurisdictions can integrate their development of transportation project lists with center planning. The guidance document provides an illustrative example of placemaking on a commercial corridor through multimodal transportation improvements that create a pedestrian friendly environment and support broader job growth and economic development goals.

As another example, Sound Transit, in partnership with Lynnwood, Everett, and Snohomish County, developed a TOD Toolkit to guide the development of transit station areas along the planned extension of light rail to Everett. The toolkit emphasizes the importance of “placekeeping” as distinct from placemaking, recognizing the value and contributions of the people and institutions that live and work in a place today. Key policy considerations include highlighting social infrastructure in planning, promoting the retention of unique aspects of existing communities such as small businesses, cultural organizations, and public art, and engaging directly with impacted residents and businesses.

Finally, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council has a resource on cultural asset mapping, which highlights how the tool may be used to plan and implement a community vision. This asset-based approach can be used in both established and emerging centers to identify existing strengths and resources in a community and build upon a center’s sense of place and enhance livability. The asset-based approach stands in contrast to a deficit-based approach that focuses on identifying and servicing needs, which is common to many planning practices. Community assets can be listed, described, and/or mapped to understand the center’s role in the larger community and how it might be enhanced in the future.

In summary, these examples demonstrate the value of deep engagement with community and recognition of social infrastructure to create a sense of place. Some combination of these strategies may be considered to enhance the framework’s guidance of livability.

What are the policy options to address this topic? Is an amendment to the Regional Centers Framework needed to address this topic?

The existing centers framework is largely aligned with the goals and intent of livable communities and developing or maintaining a sense of place. However, given the lack of specificity provided in the consistency tool, local planners approach the issue with a wide range of strategies.

Options	Issues this would address	Notes
Include additional requirements on “sense of place” in the consistency tool	Clarity between framework goals related to sense of place	

Options	Issues this would address	Notes
Require center plans to include maps or inventories of community/cultural assets	Demonstration of regional/local significance of center Documentation of the variety of local resources	PSRC should provide a guidance document on this topic
Require centers to provide a letter(s) of support from a community-based organization (CBO) that provides services in the center	Demonstrated community buy-in to center success and vitality	Provide a definition of CBO that clarifies the difference between a local government or partner agency and a CBO

The centers framework and associated documents would be improved by including examples of how jurisdictions are documenting and improving their strategies to create livability.

Conclusion

The existing centers framework provides objectives, policies, and guidance for centers to encourage livability in areas planned for growth. However, the topic is subject to interpretation and the outcomes for existing centers are varied. In recognition of this, the GMPB directed staff to explore strategies for incorporating planning for livability into the framework update.

Many existing centers create a structure for livability by assessing the social infrastructure of their center as they would physical infrastructure: documenting existing conditions, identifying gaps, and creating plans to address the gaps. The centers framework can standardize and encourage this type of subarea planning across all centers, while still allowing for flexibility to meet local conditions, through an update to the framework and consistency tool that elaborates on the best practices in planning for livability.

2026 PSRC Growth Management Policy Board Meetings

January

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No meeting in August

September

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No meeting in December

Meetings are held 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. the **third** Thursday of the month. As needed, the Transportation Policy Board and the Growth Management Policy Board meet in joint session to coordinate activities and make decisions/recommendations.

Meeting dates and times are subject to change. If a meeting is changed or cancelled, GMPB members and alternates will be notified. Updated meeting dates are listed at https://www.psrc.org.

TOOLBOX SERIES

TOOLBOX: Local Economic Development Efforts

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Date: September 25, 2026

[Registration]

This TOOLBOX session will highlight a variety of economic development efforts from across the central Puget Sound region. PSRC staff will provide an overview of the Regional Economic Strategy and share key takeaways from a review of local comprehensive plan economic development elements. Staff from jurisdictions around the region will then highlight local initiatives related to placemaking, arts, public-private partnerships and regional collaboration.

Participants will be eligible to claim one AICP CM credit.

SPEAKERS

- Puget Sound Regional Council
- City of North Bend
- City of Shoreline
- City of Lakewood

Puget Sound Regional Council

Puget Sound Regional Council

TOD on a Roll:
Making the Most of New Transit Connections

The region has been on a roll opening new transit stations, fulfilling a decades-long promise to connect communities with high-capacity transit. Join community leaders to hear highlights of recent TOD opportunities and discuss what's next. A webinar will highlight recent work to support transit-oriented development. In-person walking tours will feature work in Shoreline and Redmond to improve transit access, provide more housing, and connect neighborhoods.

Friday, October 16, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Zoom – Virtual Event
Register for the webinar

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Shoreline TOD Walking Tour
Register for the tour

Friday, October 23, 2026

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Marymoor and Downtown Redmond Walking Tour
Register for the tour

Free to attend. Space limited for walking tours.

Learn more about the event at psrc.org.

PUGET SOUND CLEAN AIR AGENCY SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL CLIMATE ACTION

Opportunity Statement

The Puget Sound Region is home to over 40 local climate action plans[1] which serve as the foundation of the Puget Sound Region Final Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). Many local jurisdictions and organizations have formed groups to take on the work of implementing these climate plans. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's (PSCAA) goal is to develop a coordinated regional approach to accelerate implementation of strategies that reduce emissions, focusing on those in the CCAP, while continuing to build on the extensive climate planning and implementation work already underway in the region. ***PSCAA proposes taking several actions to support collaborative climate action in the region.***

Call to Action

Let us know your thoughts!

Do you believe the work outlined will help us meet our regional emissions reduction targets? Do you have questions or reservations? Contact Sara Hetrick (SaraH@pscleanair.gov)

Stay engaged!

Join our email list to stay up to date with the latest information.

Background

Throughout CCAP development, PSCAA consistently heard the need for coordinated approaches to regional climate program implementation. Following discussions with regional partners at the CCAP Celebration & Next Steps Meeting (December 2025), PSCAA conducted outreach in Spring and Summer 2026[2] to engage key partners, ask questions, and incorporate regional perspectives into the design of its proposal to support regional climate action. This outreach confirmed commonly expressed needs to build collaborative climate efforts, coordinate funding, and develop methods to track and report progress at a regional level, among others. Coordinated regional climate efforts would benefit partners by leveraging collective resources, increasing opportunities for competitive grant funding, and aligning priorities to maximize emissions reductions and other important co-benefits.

Objectives

PSCAA will support regional climate action by coordinating efforts, raising awareness of opportunities and challenges, tracking and reporting progress, coordinating funding opportunities, and supporting policy development. PSCAA's objectives are to:

- Provide a shared vision and priorities among regional and state partners for reducing regionwide emissions, building on existing successful programs already underway in the region.
- Complement and reinforce existing climate collaboratives and regional venues for action by leveraging the systems and capacity already in place.
- Support climate strategies of regional importance, prioritizing strategies that cross jurisdictional boundaries, and provide opportunities for shared implementation, action, and advocacy.
- Serve as a "hub" and central coordinating force behind shared initiatives, providing new and expanded partnership opportunities and support for jurisdictions with limited capacity to implement climate programs at scale.
- Identify opportunities for regional grant applications and help to spearhead competitive, multi-jurisdiction grant applications with the largest potential for regional impact.
- Provide regular updates at local climate forums on emissions reductions progress by sector to share and build on program successes, and share best practices to help bridge local efforts with regional efforts.
- Support legislative advocacy and enhance coordination between regional and state partners on public and private funding sources.

[1] See Final CCAP Appendix F

[2] Outreach included presentations at 9 regional groups, 1 virtual listening session, interviews with 10 elected officials, and an online survey.

Proposed Agency Support

Based on input received, PSCAA proposes to provide support for regional climate action in four key areas: **(1) Scaling Program Implementation**, **(2) Relationship Building**, **(3) Funding Coordination**, and **(4) Tracking and Reporting**. PSCAA will reevaluate its role every three years to ensure it remains effective for regional climate collaboration as new opportunities and challenges emerge.

1. Scaling Program Implementation

PSCAA will focus initial efforts on scaling implementation of existing climate programs that reduce emissions in the built environment and transportation sectors, the two largest sources of climate pollution in the Puget Sound, by:

- Supporting expansion of existing building decarbonization programs (e.g., Energize, Energy Smart Eastside) by working with existing forums to determine the needs and opportunities that exist for future program implementation.
- Supporting consistent buildout of EV charging infrastructure in line with the recommendations in the forthcoming Regional EV Charging Infrastructure Plan and expansion of existing partnerships (e.g., Puget Sound Zero-Emission Truck Collaborative), with an initial focus on multi-family and medium- and heavy-duty vehicle charging infrastructure.

2. Relationship Building

PSCAA will focus on fostering new and expanded partnerships to scale climate initiatives regionally by:

- Convening an annual Regional Climate Action Program Summit with local and state leaders (Commerce, Ecology and the Governor's Office) to discuss regional challenges and solutions.
- Continuing to participate in county and regional climate forums (e.g., K4C, ASCA, Pierce County Sustainability Collaborative, Kitsap County Environment Consortium and Snohomish County Tomorrow) to share information and identify new partnership opportunities.

3. Funding Coordination

PSCAA will take an active role in supporting climate funding coordination by:

- Seeking out regionally-relevant public and private funding opportunities at the local, state, and federal level and identifying "coalitions of the willing" to participate in funding opportunities.
- Providing procurement, contracting, and grant administration support and, where feasible, acting as lead applicant for multi-party grant applications.
- Scheduling up to six meetings per year with private and philanthropic organizations to discuss regional priorities and attract private sector investment in regional climate programs.

Partner Input on Program Implementation

"This program should have a hyperfocus on emissions reduction progress and identifying and facilitating opportunities for shared regional action and advocacy."

"We know where the win-wins are, focus on those and actually show we can deliver real tangible benefits to community."

"A regional coordination program should complement and connect existing efforts, rather than duplicate them"

"Act as convenor for regional mitigation endeavors, like Energize and the Regional EVSE Infrastructure Plan."

Partner Input on Relationship Building

"Looking at ways to pull the organizations, their priorities, and efforts together could really help get more done and develop momentum that transcends each organization."

"What we really need…is a collective regular meeting of elected officials to move legislative priorities along."

"We would welcome support from PSCAA facilitating state and local government conversations in each sector to establish clarity."

Partner Input on Funding Coordination

"Grant support and staffing capacity is a huge gap for smaller jurisdictions."

"There would be great value in PSCAA writing grants and administering programs on behalf of several cities."

4. Tracking and Reporting

PSCAA will develop methods to demonstrate how collective local action is helping to meet regional and state emission reduction targets by:

- Developing a method to capture information from local jurisdictions on climate program updates and track and report on progress towards meeting climate goals.
- Creating a dashboard, impact calculator, and/or information-sharing platform on PSCAA's website to show progress on emissions reductions and maintain this as a resource for ongoing climate action planning in the region.
- Serving as technical assistant and thought partner to help regional partners understand emerging issues, apply for grants, and refine implementation approaches to existing programs.
- Providing technical assistance for emissions inventory work at the 4-county level in strong coordination with state, city, and port inventories to improve consistency among inventories.

Partner Input on Tracking and Reporting

"A regional coordination program should provide technical support to existing groups and help them align on broad topics for collective action and legislation advocacy."

"A single, clear entry point for finding relevant resources and connecting with peer jurisdictions would be very valuable, along with a platform for facilitating coordination and sharing information across networks."

"Help keep score on emissions reductions by tracking progress on metrics for the 4-county region and completing GHG inventories in a way that is low burden to local jurisdictions."

Next Steps

We are seeking your input and buy-in as we build out these proposed program efforts!

This fall, we'll seek input and guidance from our Board of Directors and start to implement support in the four key action areas outlined. We will also revisit existing climate groups and forums in the region to share our plans for action and get input on next steps for implementation, tentatively including:

- Pierce Sustainability Collaborative (Sept. 17)
- PSCAA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee (Sept. 24)
- K4C (Sept. 22)
- PSRC Regional Staff Committee (Oct. 1)
- PSRC Transportation Policy Board (Oct. 8)
- ASCA (Nov. 20)
- Snohomish County Tomorrow (TBD)
- Kitsap Environmental Consortium (TBD)

Please send any written comments or questions about the proposed actions to Sara Hetrick (SaraH@pscleanair.gov).