

Regional Centers Framework: Update Options

Regional TOD Committee
September 18, 2026



Agenda

Review Topics

1. Measuring Density
2. Boundaries/Connectivity
3. Livability (time permitting)

Discussion

- Feedback & Input
- Identify areas to refine



Why Consider Updating the Centers Framework?



- Support centers
- Feedback from redesignation and monitoring
- New state laws (HB 1491, 1220)
- Changes on the ground



Status & Process



- RGCs ←
- MICs
- Admin





Density/Alignment with TOD Bill



Density & TOD: Background

Goal: consider how HB 1491 relates to existing center density requirements, and should requirements be updated.

(5 subtopics)

- HB 1491 sets new density requirements near HCT
- Effective December 2029



Density: Options and Discussions

1. Should measuring density change from AU to FAR?
2. Increase planned density to align with TOD bill?
3. Require 2.5 FAR in all centers (state min.) ?
4. Continue to designate centers that lack HCT?
5. Revisit targets for Metro RGCs exceeding current minimums?

Discussion:

- General feedback
- Which options resonate?

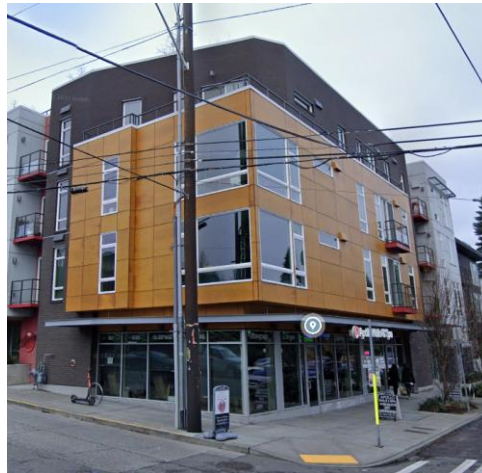


Density: What should Framework Measure

- HB 1491 sets FAR near HCT
- Framework uses AU per acre



Example: Metro center
1.88 FAR $\approx$ planned 85 AU/acre



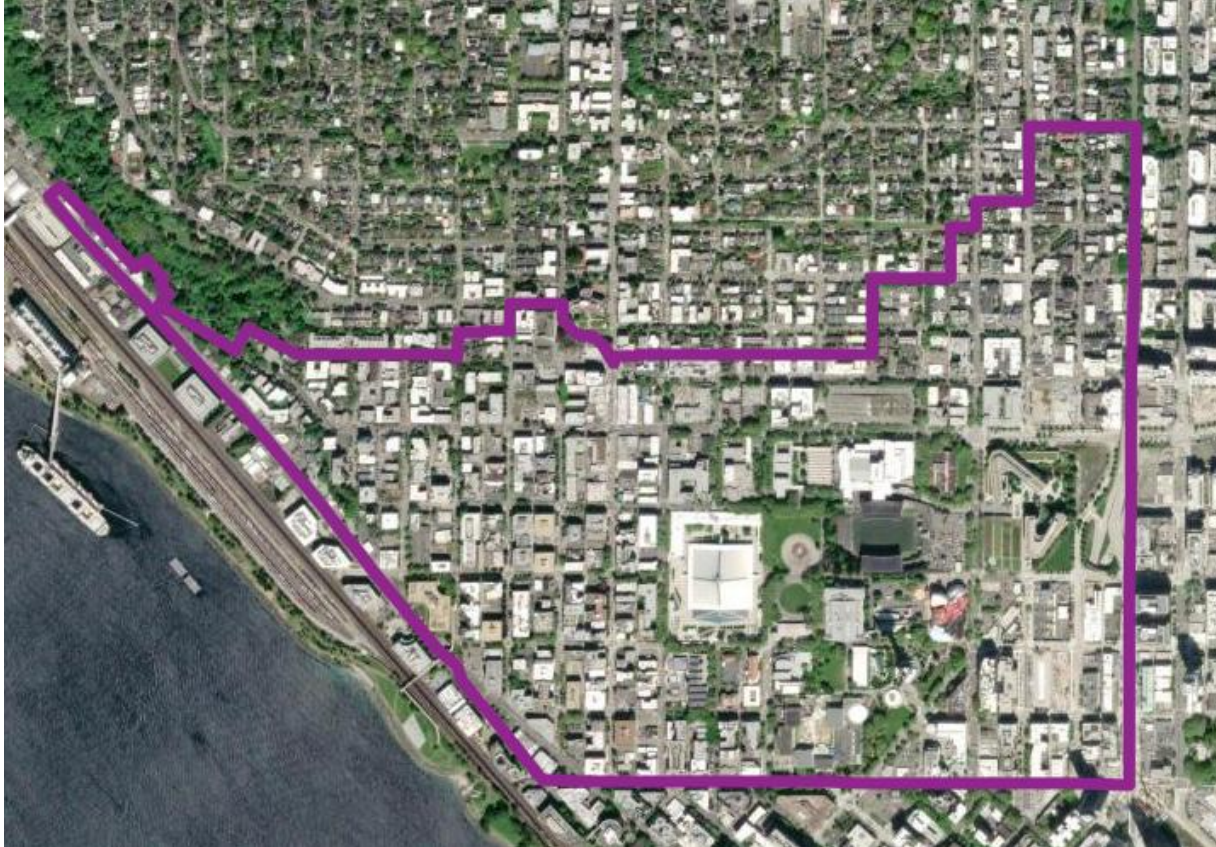
BRT
2.5 FAR $\approx$ 111 AU/acre



Rail
3.5 FAR $\approx$ 154 AU/acre 8



Density 1: Activity Unit Example



- Metro Growth Centers *Planned* target min: 85
- Seattle Uptown *Existing*: 83



Data: Office of Financial Management SAEP Program and PSRC Covered Employment Estimates
2023/2024 Images: Esri, PSRC, Google Maps



Density 2: Increase Planned Density

Increase planned density to align with TOD bill

- All centers have adopted growth targets
- RGCs with high-capacity transit stations, including bus rapid transit, will be subject to HB 1491 densities.
- Not all centers are subject to HB 1491
- HB 1491 has high density expectation for bus rapid transit and rail stops



Density 3: Requiring 2.5 Floor Area Ratio

Require all centers to at least meet state min. of 2.5 FAR

- Keep density expectations consistent across centers, including centers that are not subject to HB 1491
- Some centers may not have enough market demand to support higher density

Sample: Average FAR

3.5 Rail

2.5 BRT
stations

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



Density 4: Address High-Capacity Transit (HCT)

4. Update transit definition to align with HB 1491

Definitions: HB 1491 identifies areas for density; Framework ensures transit supports growth.

- **Framework:** Includes planned HCT and frequent bus service.
- **HB 1491:** BRT must be funded or under construction.

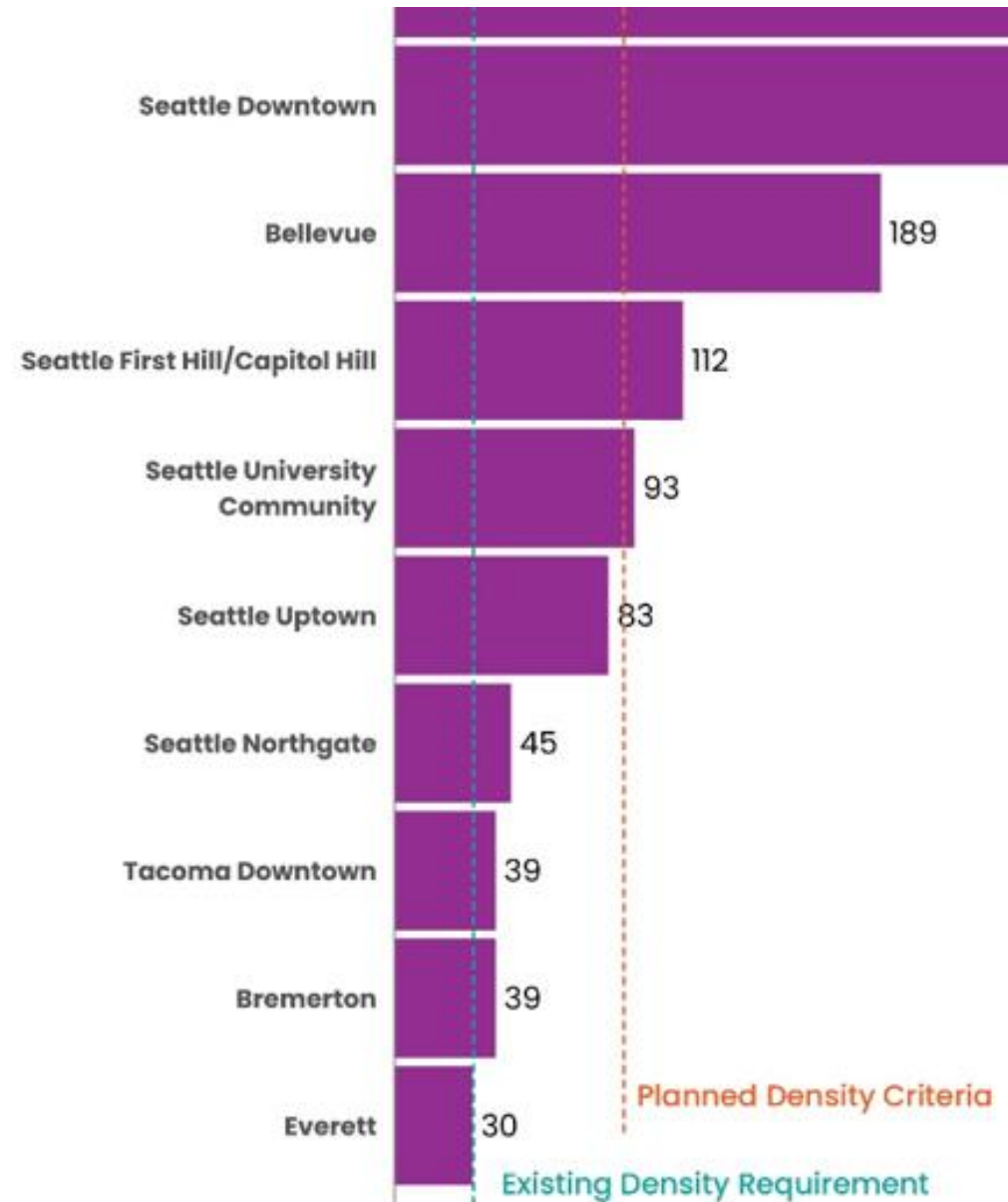
Potential impact: 6 centers would not meet Framework transit criteria if aligned with the HB 1491 definition.



Density 5: Metro RGC Growth Targets

5. Increase target for Metro RGCs

- Most already exceed the 85 AU/acre min target.
- Metro centers should still be expected to plan for ambitious growth.
- For centers already meeting 85 AU/acre target, new targets could require a **minimum percentage increase in growth**



Density: Approaches to Consider

1. Continue

- Activity Units as the planned growth measure
- Encourage FAR as zoning tool

2. Add

- Minimum 2.5 FAR expectations for RGCs

3. Update

- Align the Framework's transit definition with HB 1491

4. Revisit

- Whether the 85 AU/acre planned target remains appropriate for Metro RGCs
- Consider a minimum percentage increase in growth rather than a fixed target

Discussion:

- General feedback
- Which options resonate?



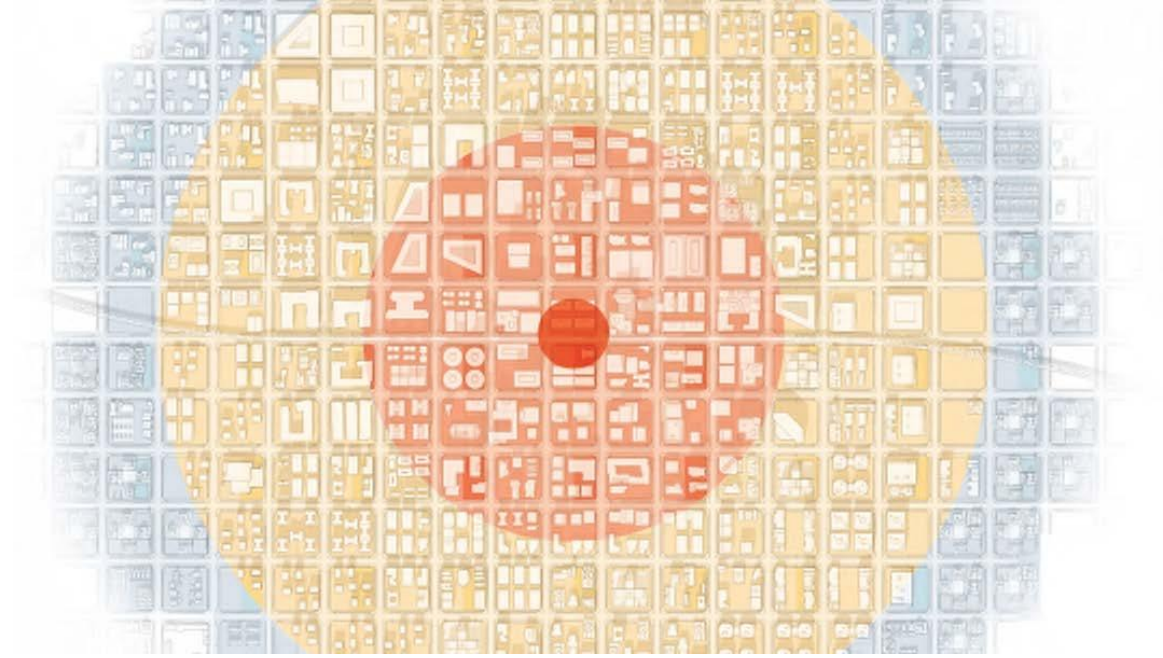


Boundaries & Connectivity



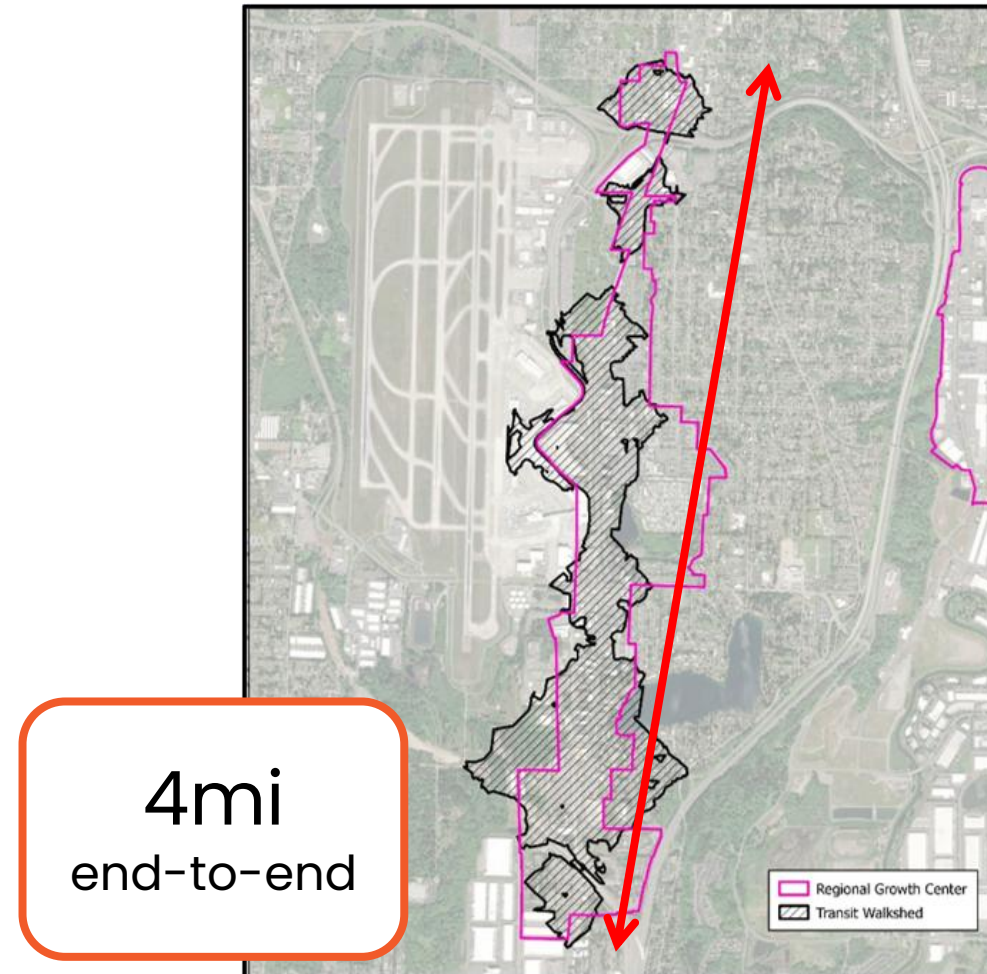
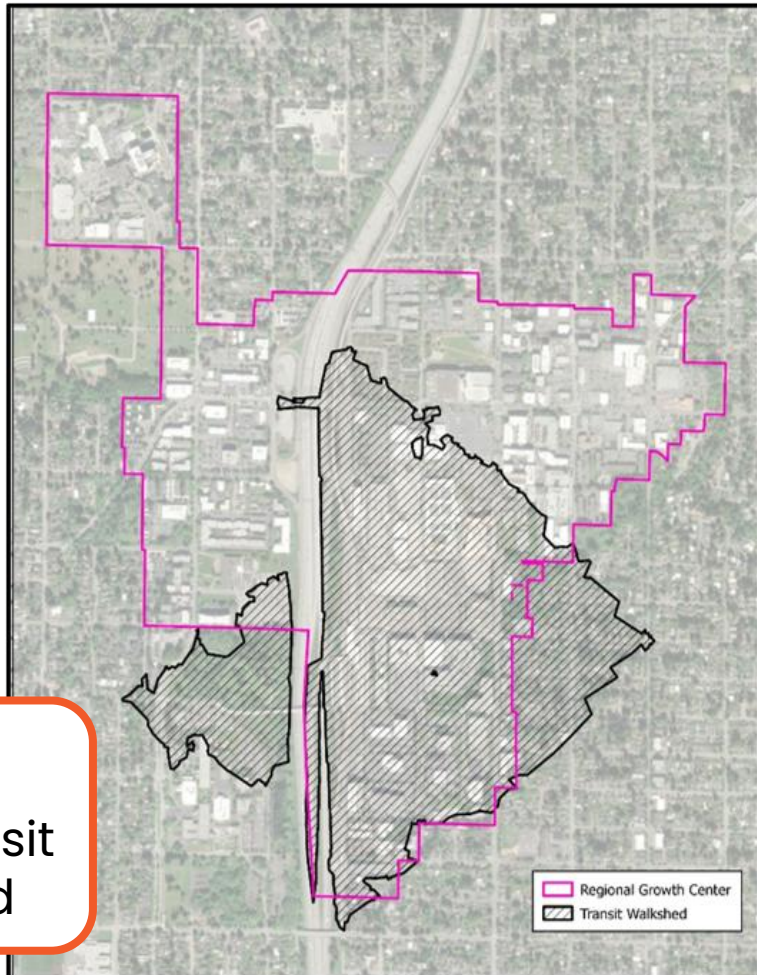
Background

- Centers are meant to be compact and pedestrian-oriented
- Maximum size is 640 acres, or 1 square mile
- Shape, size, and infrastructure barriers are challenges for connectivity and subarea planning



Boundary Examples

Regional Growth Center Boundaries and Transit Walksheds, Seattle Northgate and SeaTac



Boundary Discussion



How to support centers as cohesive, connected communities?

- Should centers justify their planning area boundaries?
- Should centers have a transit access requirement?
- How should centers address connectivity barriers?
- How should the criteria address corridors, particularly along BRT routes?





Livable Communities



Background

- Centers are intended to “have a clear regional role” and “serve as an important destination.”
- Creating places people want to live is important for attracting growth.
- Successful centers are investing in parks, amenities, and community resources



What makes a community livable?



Not just jobs + housing, but...

- Community organizations
- Grocery stores
- Childcare facilities
- Cultural institutions
- Parks
- Places of worship
- And more...



Discussion

How to encourage livability in centers?

- Set expectations for community-oriented uses
- Map community assets
- Engage community-based organizations in planning and implementation



Asset Map Downtown Kent RGC Plan



Recap & Next Steps

Today's input will help:

- Refine options for framework changes
- Flag topics that could be addressed through VISION update
- Identify areas for further discussion
- Develop recommendations for GMPB

Up next:

- MIC and Administrative topic updates
- Prepare for GMPB and Executive Board consideration





Thank you!

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Puget Sound Regional Council