

Regional Growth Center Plan Certification Report Downtown Puyallup Neighborhood Plan

January 8, 2026



The Downtown Puyallup Regional Growth Center is located in Pierce County and was designated as a regional growth center in 1995. The subarea plan supports downtown Puyallup as a walkable, vibrant and inclusive place with a broad and diverse range of housing types, retail uses, services, office uses and public spaces.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) conducted a certification review of the City of Puyallup’s Downtown Neighborhood Plan. Puyallup adopted their amended center plan on July 22, 2025. The plan was previously certified in September 2020, prior to the adoption of VISION 2050.

Certification Action

The Puget Sound Regional Council certifies that the Puyallup Downtown Neighborhood Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers.

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

About Regional Growth Centers Certification

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

VISION 2050, the Regional Transportation Plan, and PSRC’s Adopted Policy and Plan Review process call for PSRC to review and certify these subarea planning efforts.¹ The [Regional Centers Framework Update](#) specifies review of centers in 2025, following local comprehensive plan updates. All regional centers are expected to have adopted subarea plans that meet the requirements of the Regional Centers Framework and VISION 2050.

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



Certification of a subarea plan affirms the planning direction for the regional center is consistent with VISION 2050 and is an opportunity to identify any additional planning recommendations to better align with regional policy.

Review Findings

The plan includes many aspects that meet requirements for a regional growth center plan, including:

- The plan’s vision for the center prioritizes connected and complete streets and a variety of artistic expressions and events that can serve as a destination for residents and visitors. The plan provides maps of neighborhood parks, recreation and open space, and outlines planned streetscape projects to enhance urban form.
- The plan outlines goals and policies for the anticipated 2,798 housing units and 6,902 jobs in the downtown core.
- The plan encourages coordination with Tribes, ports, military installations, and special purpose districts, and adjacent jurisdictions, when applicable.
- The plan identifies planned transportation investments, programs and important assets in the center including transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The 2020 certification report (attached) provides a full description of the center plan highlights.

Based on review of the plan, the jurisdiction should consider the following comments in future updates to the regional center plan:

- Access to transit is important to serve the community and support future growth. The city should continue to actively work with Pierce Transit to support robust investments in frequent transit and support additional opportunities for transit-oriented development downtown.
- In addition to mitigating impacts on vulnerable communities, the city should include additional policies that more comprehensively address greenhouse gas emissions reduction and climate change mitigation in the center or expand on how citywide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions relate to the center.
- The plan includes a policy (DT 13.1) in support of a multimodal transportation network that accommodates users transitioning to more active transportation trips. In future updates, the plan should include specific mode split goals for the center.
- Regional growth centers are critical locations to encourage affordable housing and provide opportunities for all. The city is encouraged to continue to work with regional partners to implement housing strategies to support affordable housing development in the center.



Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found that the Downtown Puyallup Neighborhood Plan to be substantially consistent with planning requirements for regional growth centers.

The city is encouraged to address areas identified for additional work in upcoming plan updates and other planning efforts.

PSRC is available to provide assistance for future plan updates. Find additional planning resources on [PSRC's Plan Review webpage](#). For additional information regarding this certification report, please contact Katie Enders at 206-587-4812 or KEnders@psrc.org.



PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION



DOWNTOWN PUYALLUP SUBAREA PLAN

September 10, 2020

DOWNTOWN PUYALLUP

The Puyallup City Council adopted the Downtown Puyallup Regional Growth Center (RGC) Subarea Plan in 2015, incorporating it as an element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The regional center consists of the downtown area of Puyallup, which includes a cluster of civic services and Pioneer Park. The center is adjacent to the Washington State Fairgrounds, which draws thousands of visitors from around the state throughout the year for events.

The subarea plan emphasizes creating an active public realm and ensuring new development is at a dense scale while investing in preservation of historic buildings in downtown. Planning for the subarea began in 1991, with the current vision established in 2006 through a charrette process. Downtown Puyallup was designated as a regional growth center by PSRC in 1995. The city completed the subarea plan to address PSRC regional growth center subarea plan requirements and submitted the plan to PSRC. PSRC staff worked with city staff in preparation of this report.

REGIONAL GROWTH CENTERS CERTIFICATION

VISION 2040 includes DP-Action-17 (p. 98) that directs jurisdictions with regional growth centers and/or manufacturing/industrial centers to develop subarea plans for those centers. This expectation has been in place since 2003 and is required for all new regional centers. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and local governments have worked together to develop an overall process for reviewing and certifying that regional center plans are consistent with VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process.¹

In 2018, PSRC adopted the Regional Centers Framework Update. VISION 2050, an update to VISION 2040, is anticipated to be adopted in fall 2020. The Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers in 2025, following local plan updates. All regional growth centers are expected to have subarea plans adopted and updated to be consistent with the Framework and VISION 2050 by that time. Certification of a subarea plan now reaffirms the planning work for the regional growth center is consistent with VISION 2040 and is an opportunity to identify whether any additional planning work is required by 2025.

CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the Downtown Puyallup Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan, the following action is recommended to the PSRC Growth Management Policy Board, Transportation Policy Board, and Executive Board:

The Puget Sound Regional Council certifies that the Downtown Puyallup Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers.

¹ The specific requirements for center planning are provided in [PSRC’s Plan Review Manual](#), and the process is also described in [VISION 2040, Part IV: Implementation](#). Certification of the jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan for consistency with the regional transportation plan, regionally established guidelines and policies, and Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning is completed through a separate board action.

Review of Regional Growth Center Planning

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the Downtown Puyallup subarea plan. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and [Regional Center Plans Checklist](#), is listed in high-level bullets. Discussion in each topic area highlights exemplary provisions of the plan, as well as issues identified through the certification review where future work on the part of the city may more fully address VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and center planning requirements. Future work should be considered as jurisdictions update local plans in 2024 to be consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework.

The review contained in this section follows the format and content established in the Regional Center Plans Checklist, covering the seven major categories (center plan concept, environment, land use, housing, economy, public services, and transportation).

Center Concept

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Vision for the center**, including a commitment to compact, pedestrian and transit-oriented development.
- Identification of the area** designated as a regional growth center and relationship to other plans.
- A **market analysis** of the center's development potential.

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses the Center Concept requirements.

- ☑ The plan envisions the center as a vibrant pedestrian-oriented neighborhood with civic amenities, public gathering spaces, and mix of uses including housing, entertainment, restaurants, and retail serving residents and visitors from around the region.
- ☑ The plan describes the center, its relationship to citywide planning, and broader county and regional context for the center and its development market.
- ☑ The plan provides details on economic conditions and potential for the center, and a market study was completed in 2011 to support the subarea planning process.

Environment

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following environmental policy topics:

- Critical/environmentally sensitive areas**, including inventories and relevant policies and programs.
- Parks and open space**, including public spaces and civic places, and provisions to encourage accessible open space.
- Innovative stormwater management** policies and programs.
- Air pollution and greenhouse gas emission reduction** policies and programs.

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses many of the Environment requirements.

- ☑ The plan provides details on existing parks, trails, and recreation areas and includes strategies for programming by partnering with the Main Street Association and other organizations to promote special events like the Farmers' Market.
- ☑ The plan identifies provisions to improve stormwater management on public rights of way, including the use of Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) grant funds to increase stormwater capacity.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- A more detailed discussion of existing conditions related to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as policies to reduce them, would support better health outcomes and improve quality of life for people who live and work in Downtown Puyallup.
- Identifying critical and environmentally sensitive areas in the center and strategies to mitigate environmental impacts from growth would be beneficial for the center plan. Alternatively, adopting center-specific strategies in the city's Natural Environment Element could protect environmental resources in the center.

Land Use

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for center plans to address the following land use topics:

Defined boundaries and shape for the center that are compact and easily walkable.

Residential and employment growth targets that accommodate a significant share of the jurisdiction's growth, as well as residential densities and building intensities with capacity to accommodate these levels of growth.

Mix, distribution and location of existing and future land uses described and mapped. Encourage a mix of complementary uses.

Design standards for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development and other transit-supportive planning that orients land uses around transit.

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses many of the Land Use requirements.

- The center boundary is well defined, compact, and prioritizes pedestrian access.
- The plan calls for 1,100 new housing units and 1,400 jobs by 2030, which represent a significant portion of the City's overall growth targets.
- The plan outlines and maps changes to land uses to support a more compact, walkable center with policies to prioritize infill of single-family neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown Puyallup.
- The plan includes detailed strategies to further place-making and celebrate the historic character of Downtown Puyallup, including supporting programming in public spaces and historic preservation plans.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- PSRC appreciates the plan policies, like DT-3.1, that support periodic review of growth targets and activity unit densities for consistency with regional planning goals. During the upcoming countywide target-setting process, the city should ensure citywide population and employment allocations enable the city to adopt new center growth targets for Downtown that meet minimum planning expectations for regional growth centers (planning for at least 45 activity units/acre).

Housing

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following housing policy topics:

Existing and targeted housing units.

Tailored provisions for a variety of housing types, affordable housing, and special housing needs.

Implementation strategies for addressing housing targets and goals.

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses many of the Housing requirements.

- ☑ Housing growth targets are documented and demonstrate that the center is expected to accommodate a large share of Puyallup's growth. The center is expected to accommodate an additional 1,100 housing units by 2030.
- ☑ Policy DT-1.2 calls out the need to provide a range of housing types, including housing accessible to seniors and people with special needs.
- ☑ The plan supports diverse housing types by including policies that aim to increase the stock of moderate density (missing middle) housing through infill in single family neighborhoods within the center.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ The Comprehensive Plan's Housing element includes provisions for a wide range of housing types, affordable housing, and actions to increase the supply of housing throughout the city. The plan should be updated to tie these actions and provisions to the Downtown center to provide a clearer pathway for accommodating the planned housing growth and expanding housing options in the center.

Economy

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following economy policy topics:

Key sectors and industry clusters in the center.

Economic development policies and programs for the center.

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses the Economy requirements.

- ☑ The plan describes key sectors, industries, and plans for economic growth in downtown. The plan calls for 1,000 additional jobs by 2030, encouraged by new development, transit improvements, and partnerships with local business groups.
- ☑ Plans to coordinate with the Main Street Association, Chamber of Commerce, Valley Arts, and other organizations to promote downtown businesses and events are well designed and seek to make Puyallup a regionwide destination.
- ☑ The plan emphasizes the city's assets, including historic buildings and the Washington State Fairgrounds, as key economic drivers for the city.

Public Services

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Center Subarea Plan Checklist calls for center plans to address the following public services topics:

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

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses the Public Service requirements.

- ☑ The element includes policies and implementation measures to coordinate growth with increased capacity of public service infrastructure. The plan also highlights coordination with the city's update of the Sanitary Sewer System Comprehensive Plan.
- ☑ A Planned Action EIS was completed and includes specific capital improvements needed to support growth in Downtown Puyallup.

Transportation

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following transportation policy topics:

Integrated multimodal transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

Regional high-capacity transit, local transit and coordination with transit agencies.

Complete streets provisions for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, vehicles, and – where appropriate – freight.

Context-sensitive design provisions for transportation facilities.

Environmentally friendly street treatments (green streets).

Level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions tailored for the center to encourage transit.

Parking management strategy that addresses supply of parking, on-street parking and mitigating effects of parking.

Mode-split goals.

DISCUSSION

The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses the Transportation requirements.

- ☑ The plan calls for an integrated transportation network and prioritizes access for people walking and biking. Specific streets are identified for upgrades to pedestrian facilities to enhance connectivity to the Washington State Fairgrounds and nearby neighborhoods, schools, parks, and trails.
- ☑ The plan prioritizes coordination with Sound Transit and Pierce Transit to promote and enhance access to commuter rail and local bus service to connect downtown to destinations in Puyallup and regionwide.
- ☑ The plan emphasizes designing transportation facilities to be at the pedestrian-scale. Improvements to sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, parking and landscaping are intended to primarily serve pedestrians, and private developers are encouraged to accommodate people walking and biking.
- ☑ The plan prioritizes efforts to coordinate with the Main Street Association and property owners to add and maintain green elements for the downtown streetscape, including street trees, planters, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- ☑ Mode-split goals have been adopted for the center. The city is planning for a reduction of single occupancy vehicle trips from 83% in 2010 to 67% in 2035.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- Similar to the South Hill Neighborhood Plan, the city should consider establishing multimodal level-of-service standards, especially for transit, in order to increase the share of people using transit to travel to and circulate around the center.

Conclusion

PSRC thanks the city for working through the plan review and certification process for the center subarea plan. The Downtown Puyallup plan effectively addresses the provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist, demonstrating consistency with VISION 2040, and is recommended for certification. The adopted Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers and center plans again in 2025, following the adoption of VISION 2050 and local plan updates. In 2025, PSRC review will ensure that center plans, center growth targets, and local comprehensive plans have been updated to be consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework.

For additional information regarding this certification report, please contact Andrea Harris-Long at aharris-long@psrc.org or Ben Kahn at bkahn@psrc.org.