

# Regional Growth Center Plan Certification Report Metro Everett Subarea Plan

October 30, 2025



The Everett regional growth center is located in Snohomish County and was designated as a regional growth center by PSRC in 1995. The subarea plan seeks to plan for an array of housing choices available to all household incomes, preserve and rehabilitate historical buildings, implement design standards that preserve character, and provide a wide range of convenient and safe transportation options.

The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the Everett’s downtown subarea plan. Everett originally adopted its center plan in August 2018, and the plan was last amended in 2020. PSRC previously certified the center plan in 2018, prior to the adoption of VISION 2050.

## Certification Action

The Puget Sound Regional Council certifies that the Metro Everett Subarea Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers.

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the Metro Everett Subarea 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. Center plan certification is required by the [Regional Centers Framework](#) for both existing regional centers 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.<sup>1</sup> The [Regional Centers Framework Update](#) requires a review of centers in 2025, following local

<sup>1</sup> 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.



comprehensive plan updates. All regional centers are expected to have adopted subarea plans that meet the requirements of the Regional Centers Framework and VISION 2050. Certification of a subarea plan affirms the planning direction for the regional center is consistent with VISION 2050 and is an opportunity to identify any additional planning recommendations to better align with regional policy.

## Review Findings

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

- The Metro Everett Subarea Plan includes a detailed vision that outlines the importance of green spaces, a diverse population, environmentally friendly design, multi-modal transportation options, and wide range of housing options.
- The plan identifies major upcoming transportation projects, such as the light rail station, and highlights numerous policies and actions to prepare for the station that focus on multi-modal connectivity and streetscape design.
- The plan highlights numerous climate initiatives that the city has undertaken and outlines the actions specific to the regional center to plan for climate change, including providing tree canopy, electric vehicle infrastructure, and building energy efficiency standards.
- The city has updated and adopted mode split targets for the Metro Everett center in its 2024 comprehensive plan update.

The 2018 certification report (attached) provides a full description of the center plan highlights.

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

- The city should consider updating the plan to more fully reflect VISION 2050 goals and policies, as well as relevant changes in state law. These updates include reviewing the center's growth targets in the context of updated citywide targets, high-capacity transit population/employment goals, and recent changes to state law, including parking and transit-oriented development.
- The plan provides some information on the importance of serving a diverse population. Future updates plan should include additional information on how equity is being factored into the planning process, with an emphasis on the community engagement process.
- Housing requirements have generally been addressed through the comprehensive plan and 2018 subarea plan, but the plan should include updated documentation of existing and future housing units in the regional growth center. The documentation should include a breakdown of housing type, affordability, and special housing



needs. The plan should also discuss strategies to mitigate residential and commercial displacement.

- 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 Metro Everett subarea plan is 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 Drew Hanson at [DHanson@psrc.org](mailto:DHanson@psrc.org).



# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## METRO EVERETT SUBAREA PLAN

November 20, 2018



### BACKGROUND

A major emphasis of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) is the need to coordinate local, regional, and state planning efforts. Within the central Puget Sound region, local governments and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) have worked together to develop an overall process for reviewing local, countywide, regional, and transit agency policies and plans for compatibility and consistency. VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process call for PSRC to review and certify subarea planning efforts of jurisdictions with designated regional centers.<sup>1</sup> This process also provides an opportunity to coordinate and share information related to local and regional planning.

VISION 2040 includes an action (DP-Action-17 and p. 98) for jurisdictions with regional growth centers and/or manufacturing/industrial centers to develop subarea plans for those centers. This expectation has been in place since the PSRC Executive Board adopted its Plan Review Process in 2003 and is required for designation of new regional centers under the Designation Procedures for New Centers and the Regional Centers Framework. The following report addresses planning requirements and expectations for regional growth centers.

### DISCUSSION

The City of Everett adopted the Metro Everett Subarea Plan in August 2018. The regional growth center consists of 670 acres and includes the historic Everett downtown. It is served by Everett Transit, Community Transit, and Sound Transit, and will be home to the northern terminus of the Link Light Rail expected in 2036. Originally designated as a regional center in 1995, the new plan builds upon recent planning efforts in the city, including the Everett Station Area and Downtown plans. The city completed the subarea plan to address regional growth center subarea plan requirements and submitted the plan to PSRC. PSRC staff worked with city staff in preparation of this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Metro Everett 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 City of Everett's Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers.**

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the Metro Everett 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. PSRC

<sup>1</sup> 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.

recognizes that the timing and mechanism for addressing each of the comments will vary based on the jurisdiction, its resources and plan update process, and the nature of the comment. The recently adopted update of the Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers and center planning in 2025, and PSRC may provide additional guidance or review in the future, consistent with the updated Framework.

## Review of Regional Growth Center Planning

### BACKGROUND

The success of regional centers lies at the heart of VISION 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy, and jurisdictions with regionally designated centers are expected to conduct subarea planning for these areas. Subarea planning efforts are reviewed for consistency with the Regional Center Plans Checklist. The review contained in this section follows the format and content established in this 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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses the center concept provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan vision focuses on transformation of the center into a vibrant, walkable destination with a mix of uses, a variety of housing and employment opportunities, shopping, culture and open space.
- ☑ The plan clearly describes the center, its relationship to citywide planning, and broader county context for the center and its development market.
- ☑ The plan includes a market study that provides significant detail about growth opportunities and market potential for development in the center.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional centers expectations on center concept.

## 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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses the environment provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan includes an inventory of brownfields located within the center and policies to support their cleanup and redevelopment.
- ☑ The plan discusses availability of parks and open space and includes policies to support development of multiple “catalyst” projects that will create new public spaces in the center.
- ☑ The plan includes policies that support innovative stormwater management infrastructure in new developments and in public works.
- ☑ The plan encourages providing incentives to reduce air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption by buildings and vehicles.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional centers expectations on the environment.

## 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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses the land use provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The center’s boundary is well defined. While it is slightly larger than the center guidance of 640 acres in the Regional Centers Framework, the center’s compact shape and transit accessibility encourages walkability.
- ☑ The plan provides detailed information about redevelopment opportunities, future densities, and growth scenarios in the center. The subarea plan supports efficient use of urban land and a more vibrant regional center through accommodating future growth.
- ☑ The plan provides maps and descriptions that detail existing and future land uses that encourage a mix of intensities and uses.
- ☑ The plan includes detailed policies and information regarding design standards for residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses and buildings.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comments through future amendments or implementation steps for the Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan:

- Regional growth centers are designated as focal points for regional growth. The city sets a clear goal for an additional 1,000 units of market rate housing over the next ten years based on a market evaluation of the center. The plan also establishes a target of 9,591 new housing units by 2035 in an appendix, consistent with the city’s overall growth target. The appendix also includes a land capacity analysis of the center which demonstrates that the center has sufficient capacity for a significant amount of additional growth. The 20-year growth assumptions for the center are an important part of helping the city to achieve its citywide target and center development goals. In future updates, the city should provide additional discussion and goals to document its approach for addressing these longer-term growth goals.

## 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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses the housing provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan describes existing housing units and targeted housing units.
- ☑ The plan supports developing different types of housing at various densities and for all incomes.
- ☑ The plan describes incentives and implementation measures to encourage 1,000 new units of market rate housing and high-density housing near transit.
- ☑ The plan includes a policy to support the development of low-income housing.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comments through future amendments or implementation steps for the Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan:

- VISION 2040 calls for expanding the supply of affordable and market-rate housing in centers throughout the region. The plan describes in detail the incentives to achieve goals set for market rate housing and includes strategies to encourage housing affordable to a range of incomes. To document housing need, the plan should translate estimates by income range provided by the Leland market study to the city’s 20-year growth target for Metro Everett.

## 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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses many of the economic provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan describes the local market for office development and retail, projected employment, and industry and sub-industry job growth trends in the City of Everett and Snohomish County.
- ☑ The plan identifies incentives to spur economic development, including a tax credit for creating new jobs, and reductions in commercial fees, capital charges, and transportation impact fees for new development.
- ☑ The plan includes measures to create active streets by encouraging more retail shops, restaurants, and art and cultural events to take place on city streets.

#### **DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional centers expectations on economic development.

## **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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS**

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses many of the public service provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan describes existing services and facilities for water, sanitary sewer/wastewater, power/electricity, communications, solid waste management, schools, and other community facilities and human services in the regional growth center.

#### **DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional centers expectations on public services.

## **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: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS**

The Metro Everett Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan effectively addresses many of the transportation provisions of the Regional Center Plan Checklist. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan includes policies addressing complete streets, transportation demand management, transit, and freight that plan for the efficient and orderly movement of people and goods for all modes.
- ☑ The plan provides clear references to planned improvements in the regional growth center as described in the city's comprehensive plan.
- ☑ The plan references the long-range plans of Everett Transit, Community Transit, and Sound Transit and addresses the ongoing coordination between the city and the transit agencies to plan for future high-capacity transit.
- ☑ The plan identifies specific improvements to complete gaps in the bicycle network and provide additional facilities and amenities to encourage bicycling in the center.
- ☑ The plan includes an extensive update to the parking requirements in the center, which include repealing off-street parking minimums and other policies and actions that encourage efficient land use and that new development does not lead to more single-occupant vehicle trips.

### **DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional centers expectations on transportation.

## **Conclusion**

PSRC staff thanks the city for working through the plan review and certification process for the center subarea plan. PSRC is available to provide assistance for future plan updates. The adopted Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers and center planning again in 2025, and PSRC may provide additional comments or guidance for center planning as part of that work. Additional planning resources can also be found at <https://www.psrc.org/our-work/plan-review>. If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Ben Kahn at 206-464-6172 or [BKahn@psrc.org](mailto:BKahn@psrc.org) or Liz Underwood-Bultmann at 206-464-6174 or [LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org](mailto:LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org).