

Regional Centers Monitoring Update

Growth Management Policy Board | October 2, 2025



Puget Sound Regional Council



We are leaders in the region to realize equity for all. Diversity, racial equity and inclusion are integrated into how we carry out all our work.

psrc.org/equity

Agenda

Centers Refresher

Review Timeline

Board Input on Policy Questions

a) Center Subarea Plans

b) Density

c) Size and Walkability

Next Steps

Centers' Role and Redesignation

- Refresher on why centers matter
- Designations occurred at multiple times, with evolving regional planning priorities and criteria.
- Framework criteria were adopted by the board to ensure alignment with growth patterns, local plans, and VISION updates
- Now is a key time to bring centers into compliance



30 Regional Growth
Centers

10 Manufacturing/
Industrial Centers

Framework Refresher



★ Framework Background

2018 Regional Centers Framework

- Establishes consistent criteria and planning expectations for regional centers
- Establishes requirements for new centers and redesignation of existing centers
 - Some existing regional centers do not meet criteria to be designated today
- Set 2024/2025: timeline to designate new centers and redesignate existing centers
- Includes minimum criteria for countywide centers



Proposed Board Calendar

July

- Regional Centers System Monitoring Report published
- Discussion of redesignation topics

Sept

- Regional centers monitoring update

Oct

- Review policy topics and gather board input



Nov

- Review new center applications, criteria reports and certification reports for existing center

Jan
2026+

- Action items: Re(designation), and consider framework updates



Qualities and Criteria for Successful Centers

Growth Centers

Existing Jobs + Housing

Plans and potential for growth

Mix of uses

Quality of transit services

Walkability and layout

Regionally-significant places

Manufacturing/Industrial Centers

Existing industrial jobs

Planning for growth

Freight infrastructure

Concentration of industrial land

Strategies for preserving industrial land

Countywide Centers

- Minimum criteria defined in the Regional Centers Framework
- Important places for jobs, housing, shopping, and services
- Often smaller downtowns, high-capacity transit station areas, and neighborhood centers
- Designated through the countywide process



Redesignation: Future Options for Consideration

Redesignate as regional center

- Confirm that regional center meets applicable criteria

Redesignate as regional center with conditions

- Confirm that regional center meets most applicable criteria
- Identify specific actions and timeline to address inconsistencies

Redesignate as countywide center

- Determine that center does not sufficiently meet regional criteria
- Recommend designating as countywide center



Policy Discussion



Center Subarea Plans

- Adopt and certify center subarea plans

Density

- Meet existing and planned density

Size & Walkability

- 320–640 acres
- Walkable size and shape

Center Subarea Plan Requirement: Purpose

Center subarea plans provide a local vision to plan for growth and community development

VISION 2040 and VISION 2050: all centers should adopt center subarea plans

Center subarea plans required for new centers since 2002

Center subarea plans should include:

- Equitable community engagement
- Amenities like parks and public space
- Local transportation project lists

Certification checklists for RGC and MIC plans



Center Subarea Plan Requirement: Issues

Regional Centers Framework

- Existing centers: Adopt a plan that meets certification requirements

Significant recent work to adopt center subarea plans

- Examples: Bothell, Burien, Lynnwood

Several jurisdictions do not have adopted center plans that meet requirements

- 6 RGC and 3 MIC do not have adopted plan
- Several plans in progress



Center Subarea Plans: Options for Discussion

Redesignate
as a regional
center

Redesignate
as a
countywide
center

Conditions

Provide additional
time to complete
center subarea plan?
Two-year extension?

Question for the Board:

How to designate centers
that do not have
completed center subarea
plans or require significant
amendments?



Existing Density Requirements: Purpose

Centers should support compact, mixed-use development and demonstrate that they currently meet or have the potential to meet density targets

Regional Growth Center Minimum Densities

| Urban | Metro |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Existing: 18 people per acre | Existing: 30 people per acre |
| Planned: 45 people per acre | Planned: 85 people per acre |

- Requirements for existing density to show concentration of activities, potential for future development, and TOD potential



People per acre =
jobs+ residents/
gross acreage



Existing Density Requirements: Examples



Downtown
Auburn –
25 people
per acre



Downtown
Everett – 30
people per
acre



Seattle
Uptown –
81 people
per acre

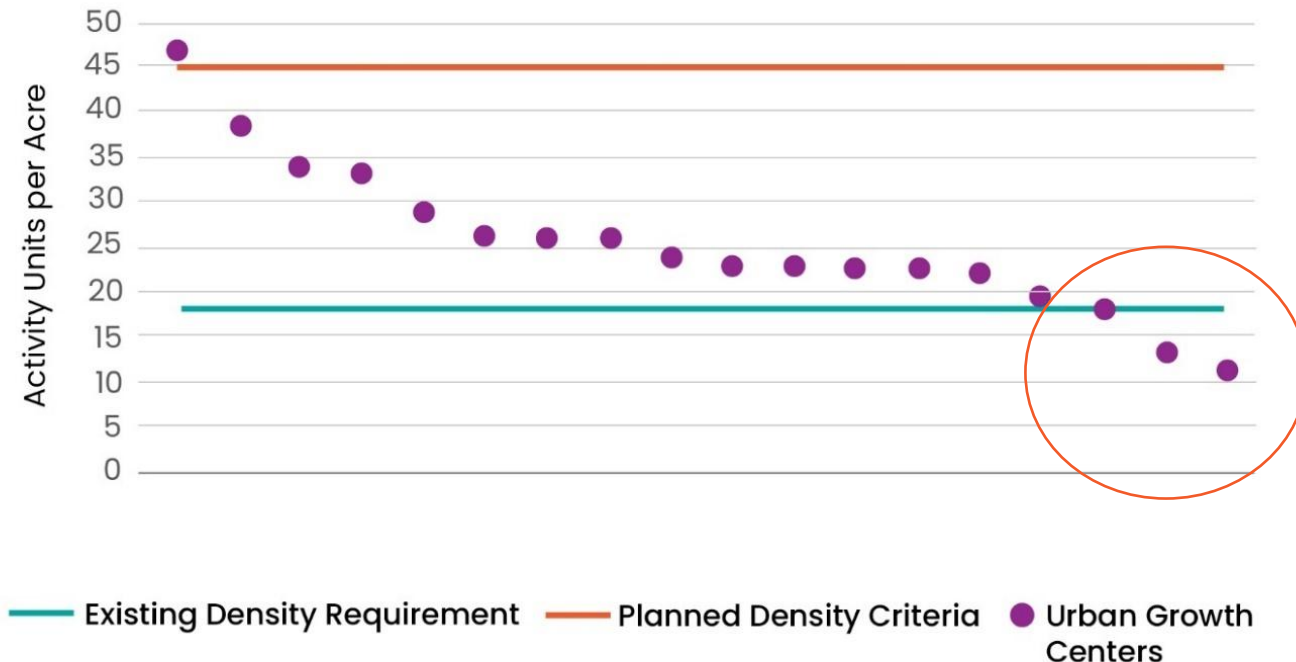


Seattle
South Lake
Union – 258
people per
acre



Existing Density Requirements: Purpose

Urban Growth Centers: Activity Units per Acre



- Regional Centers Framework: existing centers will remain designated if they do not meet the density criteria, *if the center meets all other criteria*
- Market studies have been completed
- Continued to see low growth for some centers since the Framework adoption



Center Subarea Plans: Options for Discussion

Redesignate
as a regional
center

Redesignate as
countywide
center

If center also
doesn't meet
other criteria

Conditions

- Demonstrate actual growth by certain date?
- Demonstrate implementation of market study recommendations?

Question for the Board:

How should existing centers be designated if they continue to fall below minimum density requirements over time?



Walkability and Size Requirements: Purpose

Centers should be pedestrian-oriented, well-connected by transit, and reflect their local community identity

Walkable size and shape supports a center that is accessible by walk, bike and transit

A compact size also focuses planning and investments

Regional Centers Framework provides a size limit between 200 acres and 640 acres (1 sq mi)

- Exception for centers with connected transit network (streetcar)



Downtown Bellevue: appx 1 square mile (640 acres)

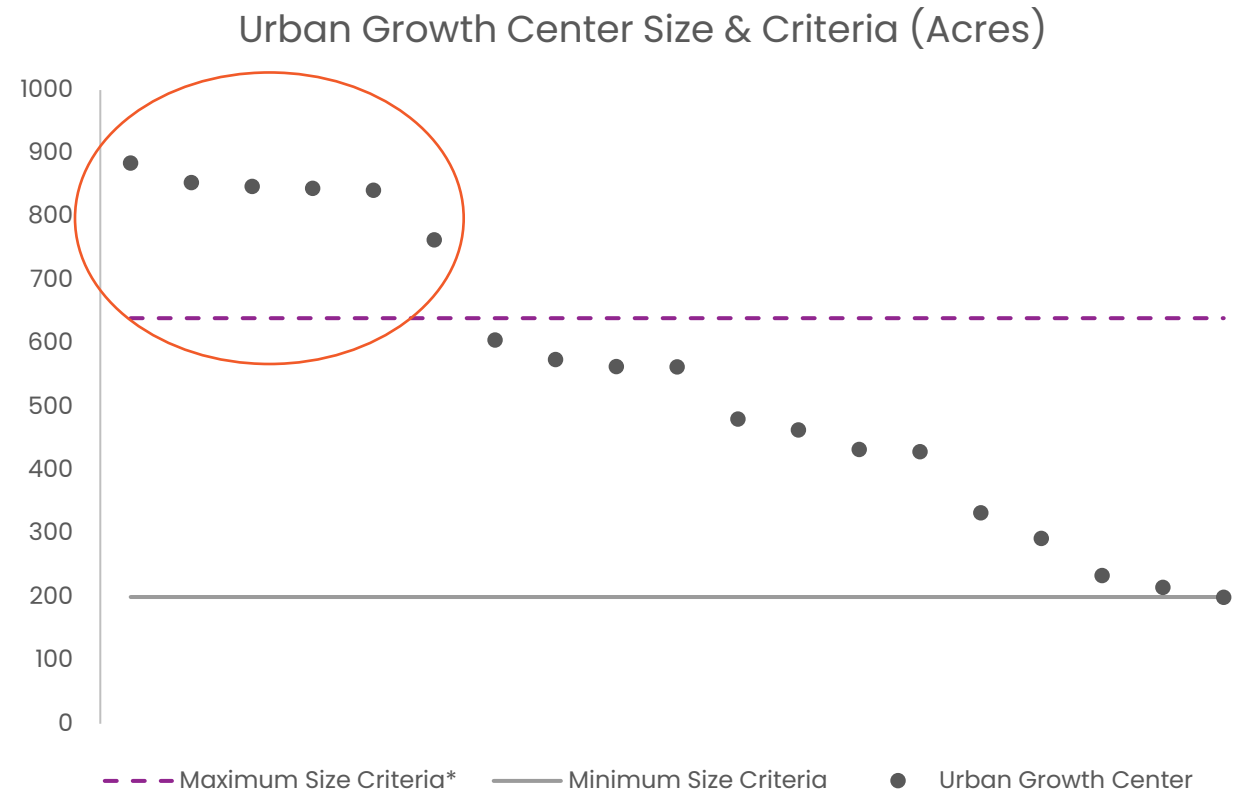


Walkability and Size Requirements: Issues

Some centers continue to be too large without meeting the exception

Some centers have boundaries that do not have a clear central access point

Several centers have major barriers to walkability, such as a highway



Size & Walkability: Considering Boundaries



- Appropriate scale and configuration
- Barriers to walkability
- Development adjacent to highways



Walkability and Size: Options for Discussion

Redesignate
as a regional
center

Redesignate
as a
countywide
center

Conditions

- Timeline to adjust boundary?
- Demonstrate this is an appropriate boundary with pedestrian access points?

Question for the Board:

How to designate existing centers if they do not meet size or walkability requirements?



Redesignation: Future Options for Consideration

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Redesignate as regional center with conditions

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Redesignate as countywide center

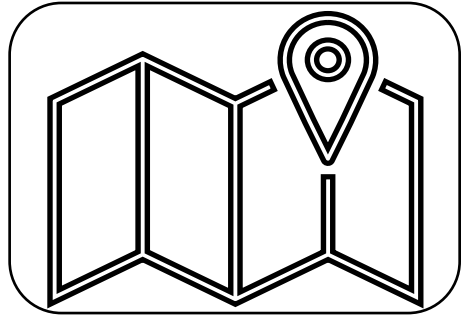
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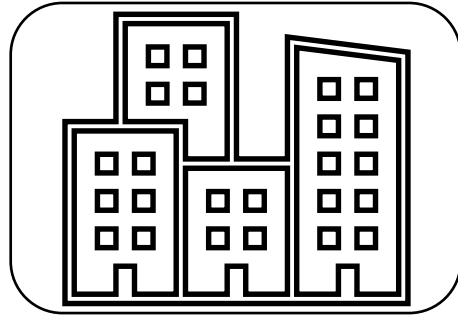
Applications for New Regional Centers

- Applications submitted for Ash Way and Mariner in Snohomish County
- Future board discussion to be scheduled
- Next application window 2027/2028

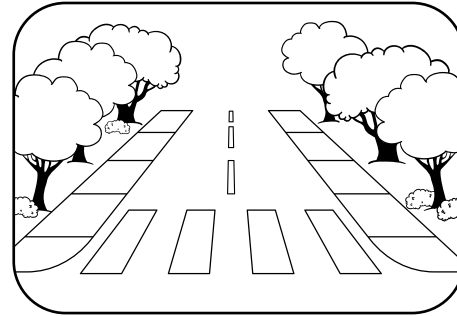
Additional thoughts and feedback?



Center
Subarea Plans



Density



Size &
Walkability

Redesignate as
regional center

Redesignate as
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Redesignate as
countywide center



Thank You!

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