

Regional Centers Monitoring Update

Regional Staff Committee | October 16, 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

Overview

- Role of Regional Centers
 - Redesignation Process
- Emerging policy concerns
 - Feedback & Input
- Next Steps



Why Centers Matter

VISION 2050 & Regional Growth Strategy



Guide regional growth allocations



Advance local planning



Inform transit service planning



Protect rural and natural resource areas



Priority areas for PSRC's federal transportation funding



Centers Roadmap...how we got here

2018 Regional Centers Framework

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



Monitoring and Redesignation Scope of Work



Purpose

Evaluate individual centers for consistency with criteria and review local planning efforts, redesignate as appropriate

Outcomes

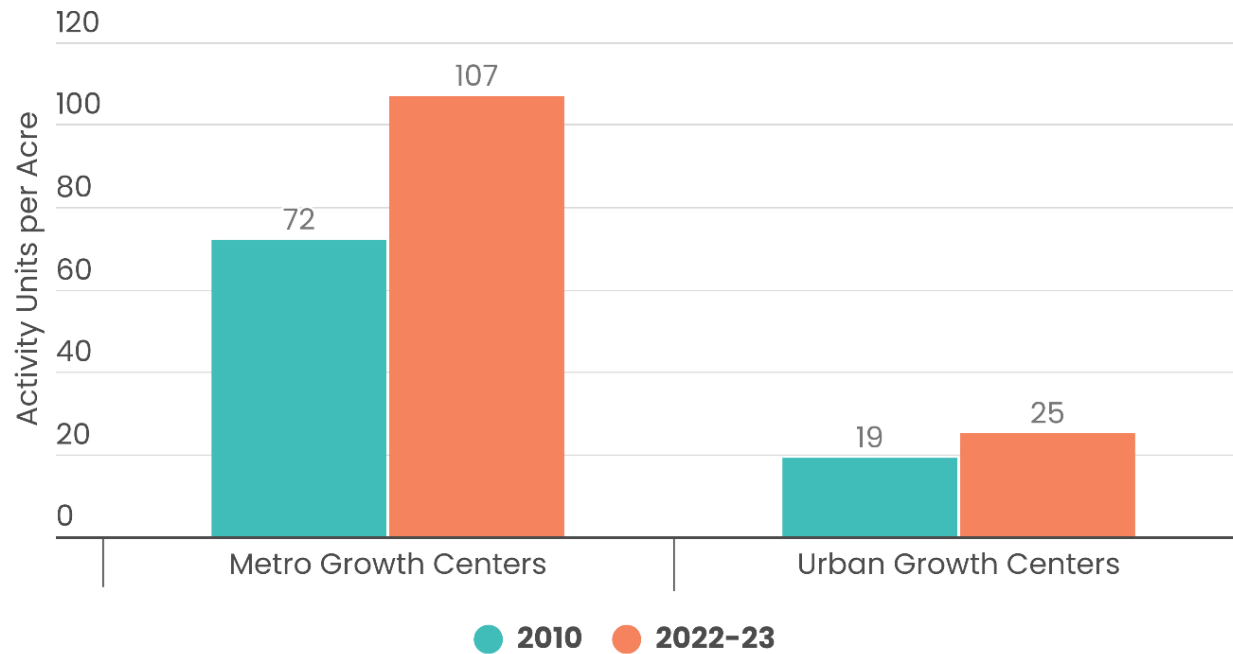
Confirm designation of existing centers:

- Are individual centers meeting the criteria?
- How should centers that don't meet the criteria, or with limited market potential be addressed?

Centers System Monitoring Report

[Regional Centers System Monitoring Report now available](#)

Change in Activity Density by Regional Growth Center Type



Key Finding:

- Regional centers are attracting growth, but primarily in Metro Growth Centers



South Lake Union



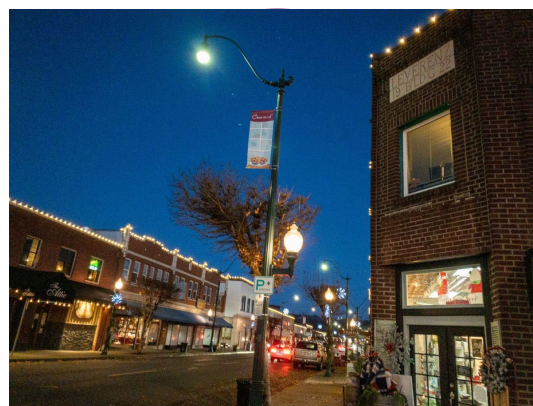
Lynnwood



Typology-Growth Centers



Regional
(Kirkland-Totem Lake)



Countywide
(Downtown Sumner)



Transit Station Area
(Beacon Hill)



Neighborhood & Local
(Madrona)

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

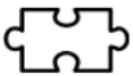











New Center Applications & Redesignation

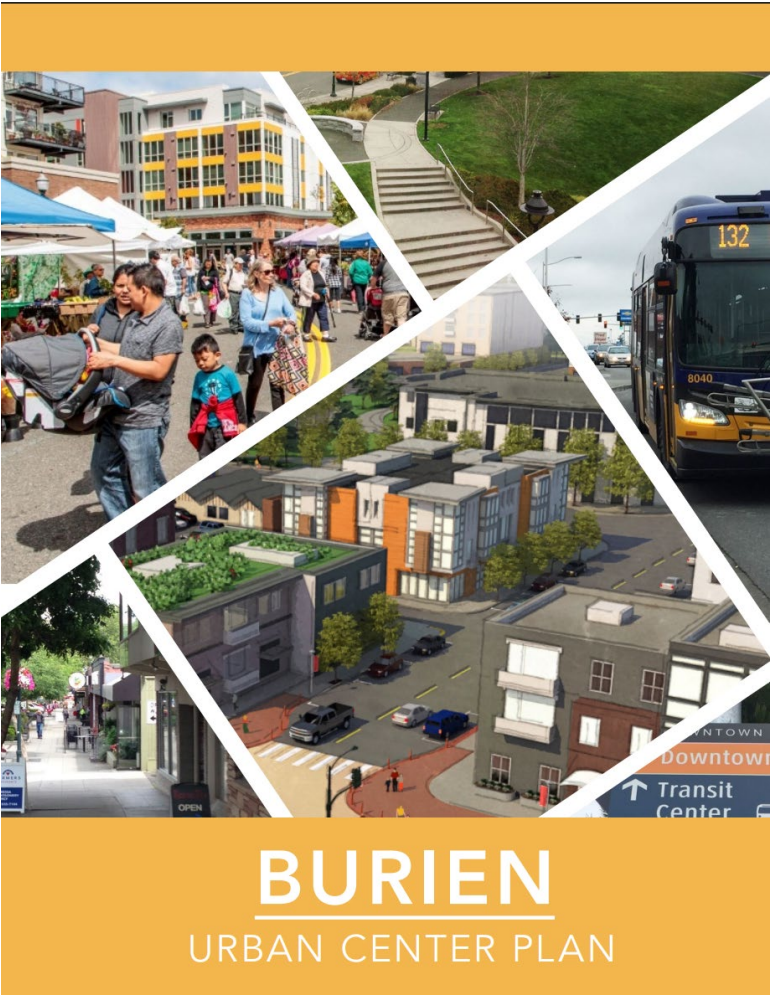
Regional Growth Center Criteria

Qualities of a successful center

Growth Center	
Key Ingredients	
Existing jobs + housing	
Planning for growth	
Mix of uses (existing + planned)	
Quality transit service	
Walkable size + shape	
Potential to grow	
Destination	

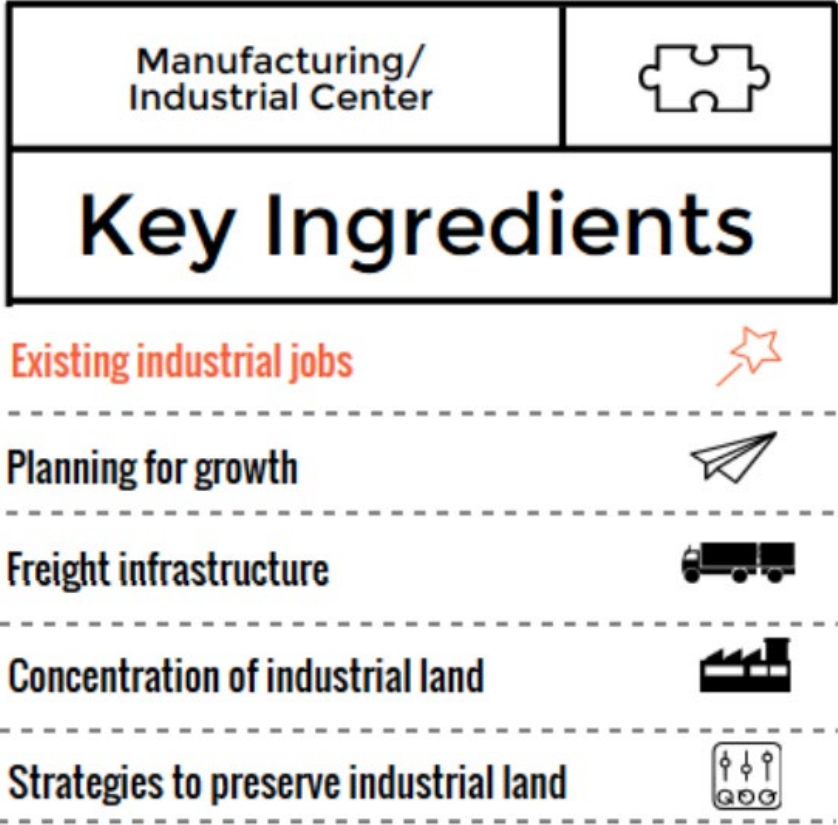
+

Local planning



Manufacturing/Industrial Center Criteria

Qualities of a successful center



+


Local planning

Exhibit A - Ordinance 2018-1982

7/9/18 Revision

SUMNER-PACIFIC

MIC SUBAREA PLAN



CITY OF SUMNER · CITY OF PACIFIC · JUNE 2018

Policy Discussion

Density

- Meet existing and planned density

Size & Walkability

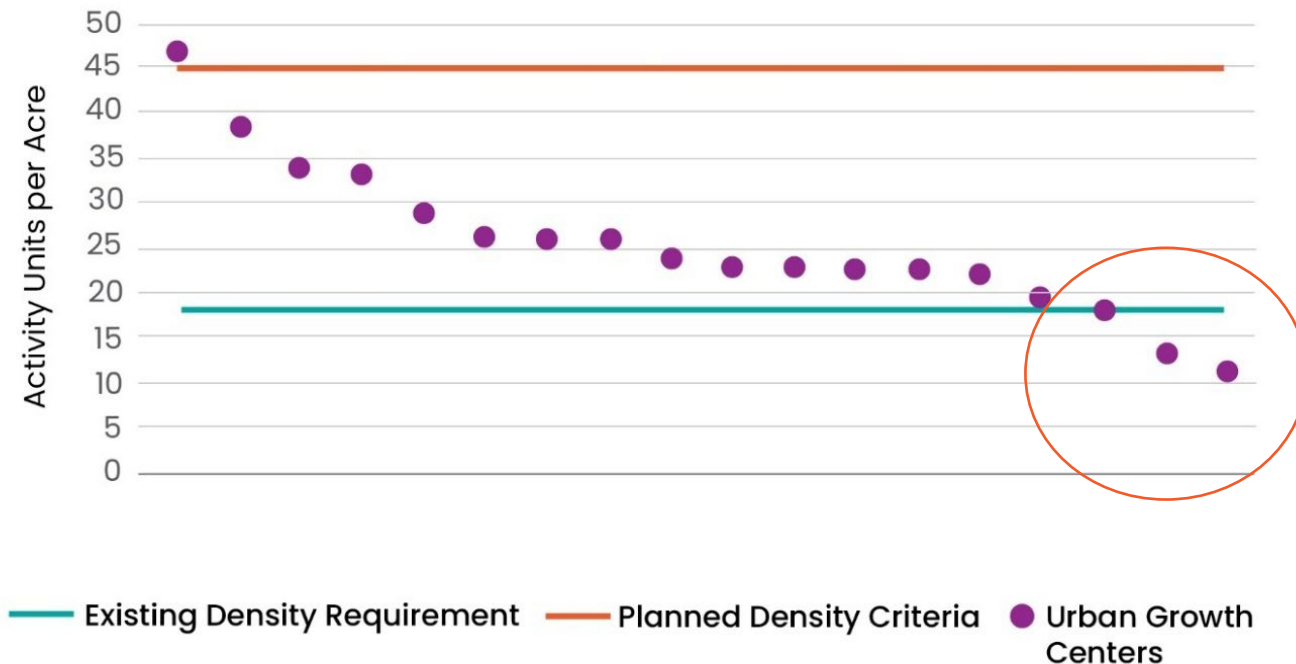
- 320–640 acres
- Walkable size and shape

Center Subarea Plans

- Adopt and certify center subarea plans

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



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: 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?

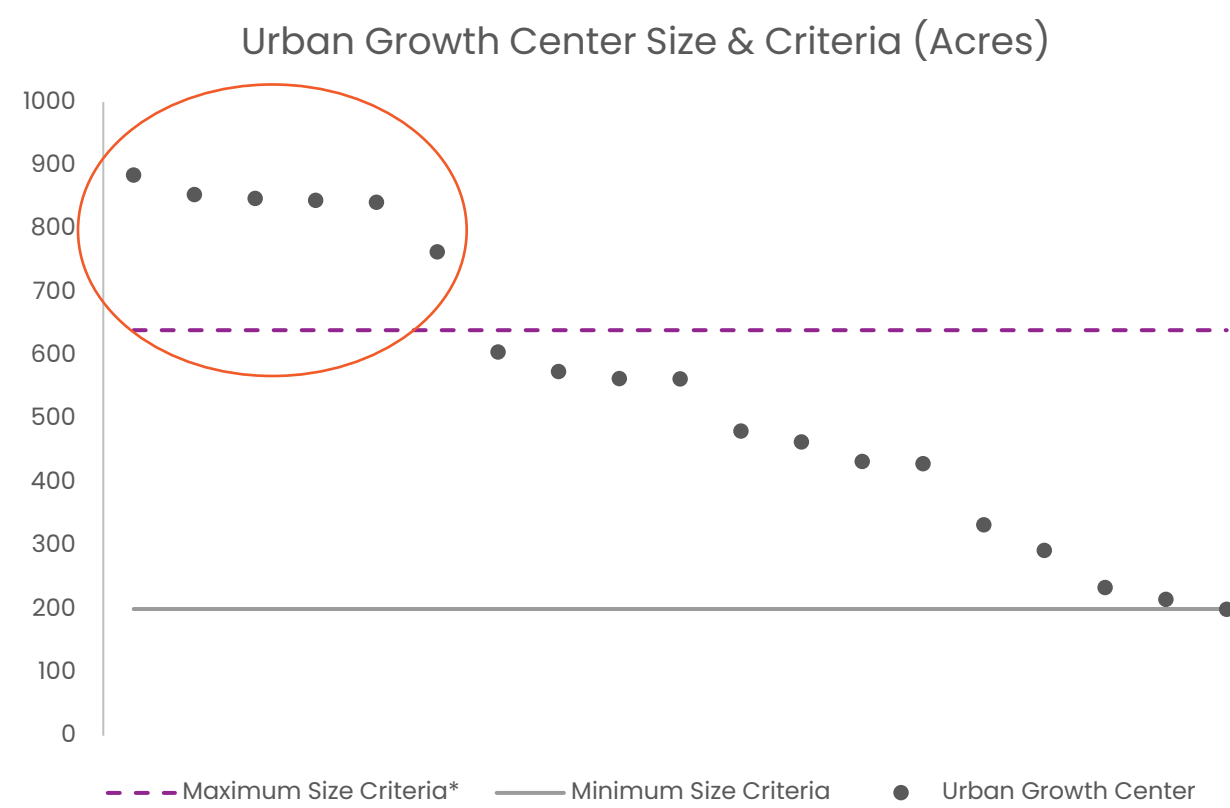
Discussion Question:

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

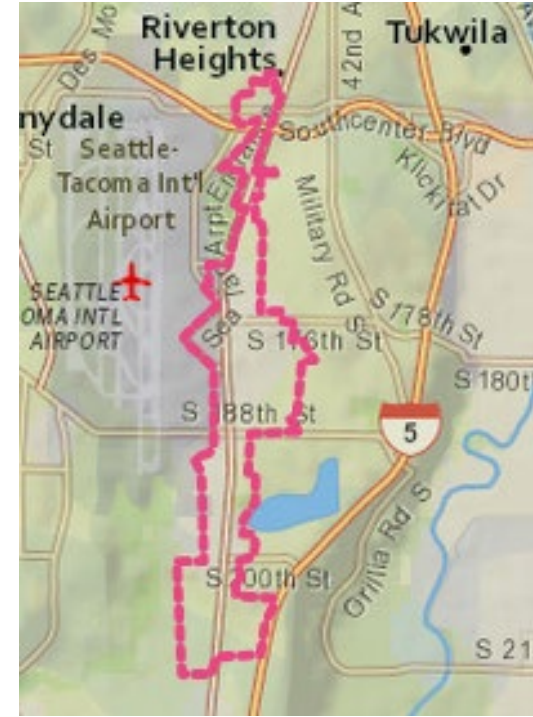
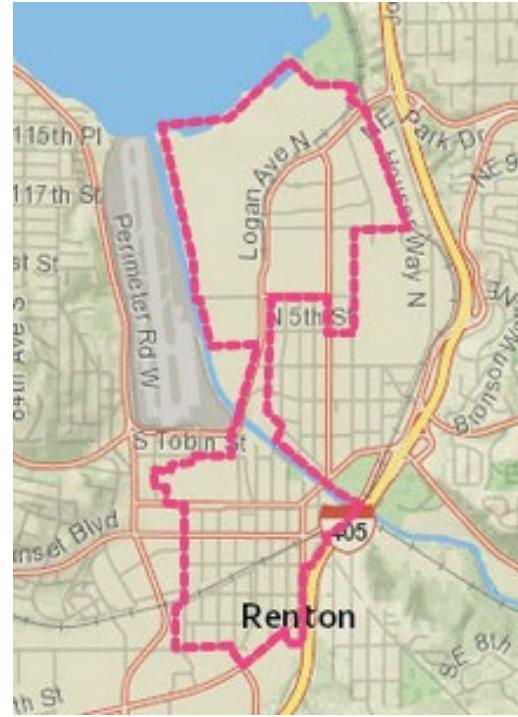
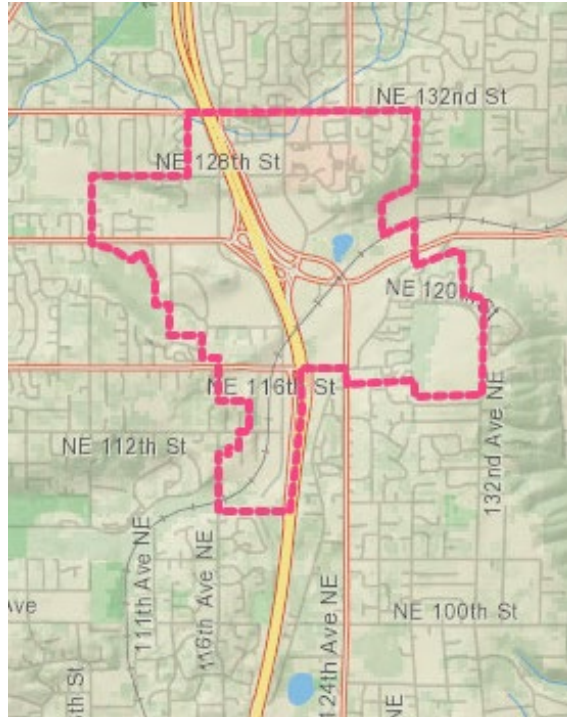


Walkability and Size Requirements: Issues

- 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

- Review boundary and demonstrate it can provide appropriate pedestrian access?
- Timeline to adjust boundary?

Discussion Question:

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



Center Subarea Plan Requirement: Issues

Regional Centers Framework

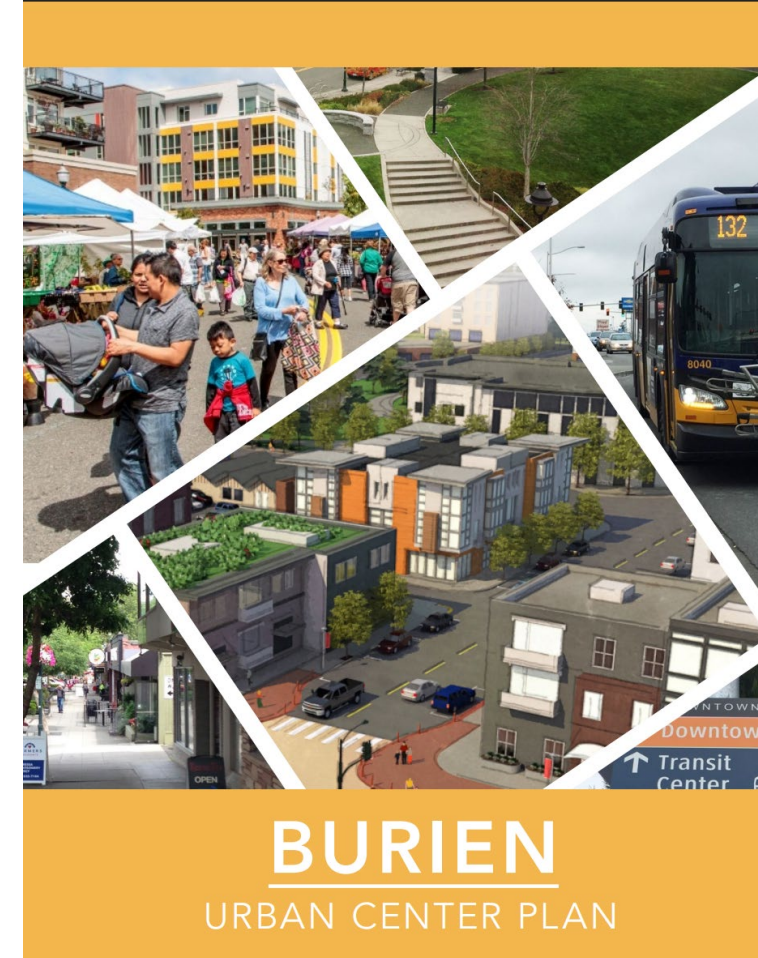
- Existing centers: Adopt a plan that meets certification requirements

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 two-year
extension to complete
center subarea plan?

Discussion Question:

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



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 and committee input



Nov

- Policy topics, criteria reports and certification reports for existing center

Jan
2026+

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



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

Upcoming Schedule

Designation review and board recommendations (Fall 2025)

- Existing centers
- New centers

Update Regional Centers System Monitoring report (2026)

Consider updates to the Regional Centers Framework (2026)





Thank You!

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