

APPENDIX E-4: CENTER PLANS²²

VISION 2040 describes multiple types of centers, including regionally designated centers (regional growth centers and regional manufacturing industrial centers), other centers (centers in Larger Cities and centers in Small Cities/Town Centers), and other central places (such as neighborhood centers, activity nodes, and station areas).

The creation and development of growth centers as mixed-use, walkable locations of more intense residential and employment development is key to implementing VISION 2040. Each city in the region should take steps to identify one or more centers (or central places) as a compact area with a mix of housing, employment, shops, cultural facilities, and entertainment. Similarly, the creation and development of manufacturing industrial centers as concentrations of basic industries that provide family wage jobs is essential to the region's economic health. Centers that are the most regionally significant have been designated as *regional growth centers* or *manufacturing/industrial centers*.

VISION 2040 directs local jurisdictions having one or more *regionally* designated centers to prepare a subarea plan for each such center (see DP-Action-17 and VISION 2040 –Part IV: Implementation) within four years of designation. Subarea plans must be consistent with the jurisdiction-wide comprehensive plan and are required to fully address all planning requirements in the Growth Management Act. (Subarea plans should be a chapter or section in the comprehensive plan.)

The Regional Council established criteria for consideration when a center is proposed for designation (Executive Board, June 2003). These criteria are incorporated in the Center Plan Checklists and discussion below.

What follows is an outline of key concepts and provisions that jurisdictions should use in planning for their designated centers. The criteria for both *regional growth centers* and *manufacturing/industrial centers* are available on-line, along with other planning resources, at: <http://www.psrc.org/growth/centers>.

GROWTH CENTERS

Center Plan Concept (or “Vision”)

The center plan should include a vision for the center, as well as an overview which describes its commitment to human scale urban form. The plan should address its relationship to the jurisdiction's overall comprehensive plan, as well as to VISION 2040 and relevant countywide planning policies. Additionally, an explanation of the center's relationship to other adjacent and nearby places is useful. A market analysis of the center's development potential, including total developed and undeveloped area, as well as

²² Revised June 2014 to reflect updated Center Plan Checklist

infill and redevelopment potential, could also be included. A market analysis is recommended for all jurisdictions with centers, and expected for designation of new centers.

Environment

Planning for centers needs to consider the natural environment as well as the built environment. A center subarea plan should address critical areas, parks and open space, habitat, water quality, air quality, and climate change.

- Identify critical areas and develop provisions to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Address parks and open space, including public spaces and civic places and include provisions to encourage accessible open space.
- Include or reference policies and programs for innovative stormwater management.
- Include or reference policies and programs to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Land Use

The center should have defined boundaries, and planning area boundaries should fully encompass the designated regional growth center. Each center should be compact in size and integrated into the larger fabric of the surrounding community. General guidance is for regional growth centers to be approximately one square mile in size, or walkable from a central point to the edge in approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This suggests a roughly uniform shape. Unless there is a clear rationale and objective, centers should not be elongated or gerrymandered.

The center should have an allocated portion that represents a significant share of the jurisdiction's overall residential growth targets (expressed in housing units) and employment growth targets. Both existing and planned urban form, including residential densities and building intensities, should be described.

Each center should contain a mix of land uses appropriate to its size and function. The center plan should include land use policies and maps that describe the distribution and location of existing and future land uses, including housing, commercial, retail, public facilities, transit and utility facilities, and open space. Also, design standards should be pedestrian-friendly and stimulate transit ridership and transit-oriented development. Transition(s) to adjacent neighborhoods and districts are also important so that the center is well-integrated with surrounding areas.

Housing

Center plans should provide for a variety of housing types, including housing affordable to all income groups. (Note: Housing is discouraged in manufacturing/industrial centers.) The plan should enumerate total existing and targeted housing units for a 20-year planning period. The

center plan should delineate a diversity of housing types with policies and provisions addressing the following:

- Dwelling types
- Density standards
- Affordable housing (for households that are (a) below 50 percent of the average median income, (b) between 50 and 80 percent, and (c) 80 to 120 percent of average)
- Special needs housing

Jurisdictions should identify strategies and implementation plans to meet housing targets and goals. Regular reporting on meeting targets and goals is to take place through both local and regional monitoring efforts.

Economy

The center plan should address the economic and residential role the center plays within the jurisdiction, along with description of key sectors and industry clusters and policies and programs addressing economic development in the center. (See discussion of employment growth targets under *Land Use* above.)

Public Facilities

The center plan should reference or describe existing and planned capital facilities, including how each will be financed (such as sewer, water, gas, electric, telecommunications). Both public and semi-public facilities and services should be identified, such as civic buildings, libraries, fire and police stations, arts centers, and related facilities. Efforts should be demonstrated to locate public facilities near transit stations.

Transportation

One of the hallmarks of VISION 2040 and *Transportation 2040* is their emphasis on integrating land use and transportation planning as mutually reinforcing. Center plans must develop their transportation provisions based on land use assumptions. Transportation planning for centers should address or reference:

- An integrated multimodal transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.
- Relationship to regional high-capacity transit (i.e., bus-rapid transit, commuter rail, light rail, and ferry)
- “Complete street” treatments to design roadways for all users, including transit, pedestrians, cyclists, and freight.
- Context-sensitive design for transportation facilities to fit the urban character of the center
- “Green street” treatments should emphasize protection of the environment, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and aesthetic street-scaping.

- Transportation system management and demand management programs and services.

Level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions should be specifically tailored to address the unique circumstances and character of each designated center. The standards should be multimodal and stress the movement of people rather than only vehicles.

Center plans should have well-developed parking management strategies to:

- Manage the supply of parking.
- Promote benefits of on-street parking.
- Reduce and mitigate the effects of parking.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIAL CENTERS

Center Plan Concept (or “Vision”)

The center plan should include a vision for the center as well as an overview which clearly describes its commitment to the preservation of its urban industrial land base and the economic role of the center within the city, county and the region. The plan should describe its relationship to the jurisdiction’s overall comprehensive plan, as well as to VISION 2040 and relevant countywide planning policies. Additionally, an explanation of the center’s relationship to other adjacent and nearby places is useful. When considering the development of a center plan, it will be useful to include a market analysis of the center’s development potential, including total developed and undeveloped area, as well as infill and redevelopment potential. A market analysis is recommended for all jurisdictions with centers, and expected for designation of new centers.

Environment

Planning for centers needs to consider the natural environment as well as the built environment, even in these areas of intense employment activity. The center plan should address critical areas, parks and open space (as appropriate to these areas), water quality, air quality, and climate change.

- If applicable, identify critical/environmentally sensitive areas in the manufacturing/industrial center and reference relevant policies and programs to protect those areas.
- As appropriate, address open spaces and open space connections.
- Include or reference policies and programs for innovative stormwater management (*related to Public Services*).
- Include or reference policies and programs to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Land Use

The center should have defined boundaries, and the planning area boundaries should fully encompass the designated regional manufacturing/industrial center. Manufacturing industrial centers will assume a variety of sizes and shapes, based upon their location, the type of manufacturing or industrial activity they contain, the extent of land parcels zoned for manufacturing and industrial uses, and the presence of supporting infrastructure. Although it is not critical that MICs be physically compact, jurisdictions should have a clear rationale for why particular boundaries or configurations are in place.

The center should have an allocated portion of the jurisdiction's employment target and should demonstrate the capacity to accommodate the planned levels of growth.

The center plan should ensure that a high percentage of the property within the manufacturing industrial center boundaries have planned future land use and current zoning designations for industrial and manufacturing uses. In addition, the center plan should include complementary regulatory strategies to restrict land uses that are incompatible with manufacturing, industrial uses, such as large retail uses, housing, or non-related office uses. The sizes of office and retail uses should be limited primarily to accessory uses. This may include regulations and plans to preserve and encourage the aggregation of vacant parcels and parcels with non-industrial uses within the center to create lots of sufficient size for expanded or new manufacturing and industrial uses. Large parcels and blocks are often desirable for manufacturing and industrial activity.

The center plan should include design standards that are used to mitigate aesthetic and other impacts of manufacturing and industrial activities both within the center and on adjacent areas.

Economy

The center plan should describe strategies to support or maintain manufacturing industrial industries (i.e., workforce, apprenticeships, land value policies, parcel aggregation, etc.) as well as key sectors and industry clusters in the center. (See discussion of employment growth targets under *Land Use* above.)

Public Facilities

The center plan should describe or reference local capital plans for infrastructure (such as sewer, water, gas, electric, telecommunications), including how each will be financed.

The plan should explain strategies to ensure facilities are provided consistent with targeted growth. Both public and semi-public facilities and services should be identified.

Transportation

All proposed centers should have a plan to identify and address deficiencies in street, sidewalk, and trail/bicycle path networks. The center plan should assess the current adequacy

and availability of transportation facilities and services necessary to support industrial and manufacturing uses, and describe how the jurisdiction plans to provide adequate capacity to serve planned activity levels.

Transportation networks within manufacturing industrial centers should provide for the needs of freight movement and employee commuting by ensuring a variety of transportation modes, such as fixed-route and high-capacity transit, rail, trucking facilities, or waterway, as appropriate.

Document the jurisdiction's plans and capital program for the provision of infrastructure, services and amenities to support planned growth within the center. This may include identification of physical gaps or barriers in the transportation system as well as projects that improve safety, reduce modal conflicts, or improve access for one or more modes to major employment sites.