

Designation Criteria for Regional Growth and Manufacturing Industrial Centers

Adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board
June 26, 2003

THE ISSUE

In October 2002, the Growth Management Policy Board approved the *Central Puget Sound Regional Growth Centers - 2002* monitoring report. In its action, the Board recommended addressing a range of issues related to regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers. Among the recommendations was direction for staff to prepare new designation and evaluation criteria for regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers for Board consideration.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Council's present adopted policies and guidance, contained in the 1995 VISION 2020 Update, do not clearly define the characteristics and roles of regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers. The region lacks a consistent terminology for its different types of centers, as well as a consistent method of measuring and evaluating activity levels within them. The region lacks any detailed guidance at all for the desirable characteristics of manufacturing/industrial centers.

The 1995 VISION 2020 Update conveyed the expectation that the identification of centers would occur through countywide planning processes, in consultation with affected interests such as transit and regional agencies in a manner compatible with VISION 2020. It did not describe, however, how these designations could be coordinated in a manner that ensured that they were consistent with one another and with the objectives of the regional plan.

Upon review of the centers designation processes that have been developed by countywide organizations, and the resulting centers, elected officials and community representatives have recognized that the present methods of identifying and designating regional growth and manufacturing/industrial centers are inconsistent among the four counties. Each county has a different process, which has resulted in a wide range of different types of centers. It is unclear how some of the current regional growth centers were identified and formally designated. Some manufacturing/industrial centers appear to have a preliminary designation that must be formalized. The lack of clarity was apparent when the Regional Council began to apply its decision to allocate federal transportation funds to regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers.

The 1995 VISION 2020 Update describes two types of regional centers: “Urban Centers” and “Manufacturing Industrial Centers.” “Urban Centers” are further broken down into a hierarchy of regional urban centers, consisting of “Regional Centers,” “Metropolitan Centers,” and “Urban Centers.” Since the adoption of the plan, the Regional Council has made no practical distinction between different types of regional urban centers, and has treated them all as one type. The following criteria continue that approach, and defer discussion of the composition and purpose of a hierarchy of regional centers to the update of VISION 2020. In these criteria, “Urban Centers” will be referred to as “regional growth centers” to distinguish them from locally or sub-regionally designated urban centers.

NEW CRITERIA

The Growth Management Policy Board has recommended that the Executive Board adopt a clear position that in the future the Policy and Executive Boards should have roles in reviewing and approving the final designation of regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers. The following evaluation and designation criteria will only apply to proposed new regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers. Although there has been discussion that the reevaluation of existing centers could occur as part of a comprehensive VISION 2020 update in a process that will be determined by the Growth Management Policy Board, existing regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers are not subject to these criteria at this time.

It is the expectation that candidate centers will on the whole conform to the designation criteria. If not, jurisdictions should explain why a proposed center does not meet a particular criterion. The data and background information that are identified and requested in the criteria are designed to provide the Regional Council Growth Management Policy and Executive Boards with adequate information with which to make an informed judgment about whether a regional designation is appropriate. The final regional designation will be made at the discretion of the Executive Board after considering the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board.

The attached draft criteria clarify the intent of centers policies and guidance adopted in the 1995 VISION 2020 Update by specifying thresholds, standards, and regionally consistent designation processes for regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers.

Designation Criteria for Regional Growth Centers

PART 1. Eligibility and Designation.

- a. To be eligible for consideration as a designated “regional growth center”, the jurisdiction must:
 - i. Demonstrate that the proposed center is located within an urban growth area.
 - ii. Become a “candidate” by being recognized as appropriate for a regional designation in countywide planning policies. It is preferred that regional growth centers will be located within incorporated areas.
 - iii. Identify the center as a candidate for a regional center designation in the local jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan.
 - iv. Adopt an ordinance or other action requesting the Regional Council to designate it as a regional growth center and authorizing the staff of the jurisdiction to submit an application on behalf of the Council and city administration.
- b. Designation of regional growth centers will be made by the Executive Board based on the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board, and a report prepared by Regional Council staff.

PART 2. Purpose and Objective.

The regional growth centers designation criteria and process are designed to:

- a. Document that the candidate center has the desire and development potential to play a regional role in attracting population and employment growth.
- b. Limit the number and geographic distribution of regional growth centers. The region needs to maintain a reasonable number and distribution in order for regional growth centers to:
 - i. Serve as an organizing framework for the regional transportation system.
 - ii. Serve as focal points for regional investments in urban services and amenities.
 - iii. Have the potential to generate sufficient market demand to make centers successful.
- c. Provide regional consistency regarding the type, location, distribution, and development potential of new regional growth centers.

PART 3. Background Information.

The jurisdiction must provide the following background information to the Growth Management Policy Board:

- a. Documentation of its eligibility as described in Part 1.
- b. The jurisdiction's vision for the proposed center.
- c. A brief history of the development of the center.
- d. Existing conditions and characteristics – Primary functions of the center, current land use, transportation system, open space, population, employment, recent development activity.
- e. Current status of planning efforts and implementation tools in the center. Does jurisdiction have an adopted plan for the proposed center? If not, is there a commitment by the city to the development of a plan? If so, when will a plan for the center be completed?
- f. A general description of adjacent land uses within ½ mile of the proposed center boundaries, and their relationship to the center.
- g. The relationship of the proposed center to the regional transportation network, including any plans for connections to other centers through regional high capacity transportation.

PART 4. Designation Criteria.

Candidate regional growth centers must demonstrate and document the following:

- a. **Compatibility with VISION 2020.** Provide a description of how the candidate regional growth center reinforces the centers concept within VISION 2020.
- b. **Required Activity Levels - Population + Employment Thresholds.**
 - i. Must have a minimum existing activity (population + employment) level of 13 activity units per gross acre.
 - ii. Must have a minimum activity level target of 45 activity units per gross acre.

- c. **Commitment to Human Scale Urban Form.** A mix of complementary land uses, a compact size and shape, and a fine grain block size/access network are all important urban form provisions that help insure the success of the regional growth center. The mix of uses promotes pedestrian activity and provides housing, employment, services, and amenities to persons living and/or working in the center or nearby. These provisions also help to generate enough activity to support high capacity transit service. One transit station can serve an area of about 1 sq mile area (640 acres) – a ½-mile walking radius. To support the station, a minimum of between 20,000 - 25,000 activity units (some combination of jobs and households) within 640 acres is needed (30-50 activity units per acre).

To address these urban form issues, the proposed center must address the following:

- i. **Mix of Uses.** Document the jurisdiction’s plan for the center and the regulatory authority, incentives, programs, and other mechanisms designed to attract and maintain a mix of complementary land uses, particularly uses that generate pedestrian activity and transit ridership. Document that the jurisdiction plans to accommodate a significant residential population among the mix of uses within the center.
- ii. **Size and Shape** –An ideal center should generally have a compact form, and be easily walkable from a central point in approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This suggests a roughly circular or square shape of about a ½-mile radius, with an approximate size of 1 square mile (640 acres).
- A jurisdiction proposing a center over 640 acres, or with a generally elongated or gerrymandered shape must document its rationale and objectives for the proposed size and shape.
- iii. **Block Size, Street Network, Sidewalk Network, Trail/Bicycle Network** – All proposed centers must have a plan to identify and address deficiencies in street, sidewalk, and trail/bicycle path network. Centers must have a plan (or commitment to develop one) to break-up superblocks into a finer grain network of streets and routes for pedestrian/bicycle access. Pedestrian networks can be an effective way to help to establish connections through large blocks and address deficiencies in urban form.
- d. Document jurisdiction plans and capital program for the provision of infrastructure, services and amenities to support planned growth.

Designation Criteria for Manufacturing/Industrial Centers

PART 1. Eligibility and Designation.

- a. To be eligible for consideration as a designated “manufacturing industrial center,” (MIC or “center”) the jurisdiction must:
 - i. Demonstrate that the proposed center is located within an urban growth area.
 - ii. Establish it as a “candidate” by having it recognized as appropriate for a regional manufacturing industrial center designation in its county’s countywide planning policies. Although preferred, it is not required that proposed manufacturing industrial centers be located in incorporated areas.
 - iii. Identify the center as a candidate for a regional manufacturing industrial center designation in the local jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan.
 - iv. Adopt an ordinance or other action requesting the Regional Council to designate it as a regional manufacturing industrial center and authorizing the staff of the jurisdiction to submit an application on behalf of the Council and city administration.
- b. Designation of Manufacturing/Industrial growth centers will be made by the Executive Board based on the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board, and a report prepared by Regional Council staff.

PART 2. Purpose and Objective.

The Manufacturing/Industrial centers designation criteria and process are designed to:

- a. Document that the candidate center has the desire and development potential to play a regional role in attracting employment growth.
- b. Limit the number and geographic distribution of manufacturing industrial centers. The region needs to maintain a reasonable number and distribution in order for manufacturing industrial centers to:
 - i. Serve as an organizing framework for the Freight and Goods component of the region’s Metropolitan Transportation System.
 - ii. Serve as the primary concentrations of industrial and manufacturing related jobs that are important to the region.

- iii. Have the potential to generate sufficient market demand to make centers successful.
- c. Provide regional consistency regarding the type, location, distribution, and development potential of new manufacturing industrial centers.

PART 3. Background Information.

The jurisdiction must provide the following background information to the Growth Management Policy Board:

- a. Documentation of eligibility as described in Part 1.
- b. The jurisdiction's vision for the proposed center.
- c. A brief history of the development of the center.
- d. Existing conditions and characteristics – Primary functions of the center, current land use, transportation system, population, employment, recent development activity. Description of any environmental cleanup, remediation projects, or other issues that might affect the potential for development or redevelopment
- e. Current status of planning efforts and implementation tools in the center.
- f. A general description of adjacent land uses within ½ mile of the proposed center boundaries, and their relationship to the center.
- g. The relationship of the proposed center to the regional transportation network, and in particular to the Freight and Goods component of the Metropolitan Transportation System.
- h. The likely travel origins of manufacturing industrial center employees.

PART 4. Designation Criteria.

Candidate manufacturing industrial centers must demonstrate and document the following:

- a. **Compatibility with VISION 2020.** Jurisdictions must provide a description of how the candidate manufacturing industrial center reinforces the centers concept within VISION 2020, including the role of the center in the region's economy.

- b. **Required Activity Levels - Employment Thresholds.** Jurisdictions must demonstrate that proposed manufacturing industrial centers:
 - i. Have a minimum existing employment level of 10,000 jobs.
 - iii. Have a minimum employment of target of at least 20,000 jobs.
- c. **Commitment to Preservation of an Urban Industrial Land Base.** As described in VISION 2020, manufacturing industrial centers are major, existing regional employment areas of intensive, concentrated urban manufacturing and industrial land uses that cannot be easily mixed at higher densities with other uses. Jurisdictions should demonstrate their commitment to preserving land within the urban area for manufacturing, industry and related uses.

To address this issue, the jurisdiction nominating the center must submit materials that demonstrate and describe:

- i. **Location.** A proposed Manufacturing/Industrial center is within an Urban Growth Area.
- ii. **Planned Land Use and Zoning.** At least 80% of property within proposed new manufacturing industrial center boundaries must have planned future land use and current zoning designations for industrial and manufacturing uses.
- iii. **Protection from Incompatible Land Uses.** The jurisdiction's plan for the center and regulatory authority discourage land uses that are incompatible with manufacturing, industrial uses, such as large retail uses, high concentrations of housing, or non-related office uses. The sizes of office and retail uses should be limited unless as an accessory use.
- iv. **Aggregation.** 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.
- v. **Size and Shape** – 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 explain why particular boundaries or configurations for a nominated center were selected.

- vi. **Street Network, Sidewalk Network, Trail/Bicycle Network** – All proposed centers must have a plan to identify and address deficiencies in street, sidewalk, and trail/bicycle path networks. Jurisdictions should describe how transportation plans assess the current adequacy and availability of transportation facilities and services necessary to support industrial and manufacturing uses, and how the jurisdiction plans to provide adequate capacity to serve planned activity levels.
- vii. **Urban Design** – Urban design standards that are used to mitigate aesthetic and other impacts of manufacturing and industrial activities both within the center and on adjacent areas.
- d. **Mobility.** Transportation networks within manufacturing industrial centers should provide for the needs of freight movement and employees by ensuring a variety of transportation modes such as transit, rail, trucking facilities, or waterway, as appropriate.
- e. **Local Commitment to Improvements.** Document the jurisdiction’s plans and capital program for the provision of infrastructure, services and amenities to support planned growth within the center.