VISION Consistency Tool for Regional Growth Center Plans

This tool is designed to assist jurisdictions in developing, updating, or amending center plans and identifies key planning expectations for Regional Growth Center plans (beyond the general requirements for comprehensive plans). These expectations are based on VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework (2018). The tool can be used at various times in the center planning process:

Plan Scoping: Use checklist items as guidance for scoping the extent of center plans.

Draft Plan Review: Submit draft center plans to PSRC prior to adoption. Completing and submitting this tool and providing early drafts to PSRC helps identify potential consistency issues early in the process.

Certification Review: Along with the adopted plan, a completed tool will assist PSRC's review of the plan. Demonstrating inclusion of all of the necessary information in the checklist helps facilitate certification. *Note: The PSRC Executive Board is the final decision-making body for plan certification.*

Regional Collaboration: The tool provides an opportunity for jurisdictions to highlight innovative policies and programs and supports sharing of best practices across the region.

Regional Centers Monitoring: PSRC will conduct another centers monitoring period in 2025, following the 2024 local plan updates. This tool helps jurisdictions ensure updated center policies address regional guidance and that Framework criteria is met.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan Center plans can be a separate element in the comprehensive plan or developed as a stand-alone subarea plan. When done as a subarea plan, it must be fully consistent with the comprehensive plan and the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

Resources

- Regional Plans: VISION 2050, Regional Transportation Plan, and Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Centers Framework (2018) and Centers webpage – access centers planning resources
- Plan Review webpage and Certification Reports– access information about the review and certification process, find PSRC resources by policy area, and view jurisdictions' past reports to identify areas for future review
- VISION 2040 to VISION 2050 – summary of what changed in VISION 2050
- VISION 2050 Policy Matrix – a comparison of multicounty planning policies and actions from VISION 2040 to VISION 2050

Checklist at a Glance

The plan should:		Page Reference
✓ Describe key econom[...] e center, including those recognized in the Re[...]	**Indicates criteria from the Regional Centers Framework**	
☑ Demonstrate the center's market potential for accommodating future population and job growth.[1]		
The plan should include policies and identify programs that:		**Page/Policy Reference**
✓ Encourage the use of economic development tools to promote retention, expansion, and growth of employment opportunities within the center.		
⊖ Reduce the risk o[...]	**Indicates new or expanded emphasis in VISION**	nt strategies.	

Indicate where to find the best or most complete example. It is not necessary to list all relevant pages/policies. Some items may be addressed by the comprehensive plan or other plans, programs, or strategies.

Center Plan Concept (Vision) / Regional Collaboration

The plan should:	Page Reference
✓ Include a vision statement that promotes accommodating growth through compact, pedestrian- and transit-oriented development.	
✓ Describe the center's role within the city, county, and region.	
✓ Clearly identify the area as a designated regional growth center and describe the relationship of the center plan to the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan, countywide planning policies, and VISION 2050.	
⬡ Describe or reference how equitable community engagement shaped the plan's goals, policies, and strategies.	
The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	**Page/Policy Reference**
⬡ Encourage coordination with tribes, ports, military installations, and special purpose districts, and adjacent jurisdictions, when applicable.	
⬡ Prioritize services and access to opportunity for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.	
⬡ Prioritize local investments in the center, including a list of specific transportation planning investments and programs and other public infrastructure investments.	

Environment and Climate Change

The plan should:	Page Reference
✓ Identify significant environmental features in or near the center, including streams and shorelines.	
✓ Describe existing and planned parks, trails, and open space, including public and civic spaces.	
✤ Recognize the role of land use, development, and transportation on greenhouse gas emissions.	

The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	Page/Policy Reference
✓ Protect and enhance critical/environmentally sensitive areas, parks, and open spaces.	
✤ Identify and minimize gaps in equitable access to parks and open spaces.	
✓ Support innovative stormwater management.	
✤ Avoid or mitigate environmental impacts for vulnerable populations.	
✤ Support achievement of state and regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.	
✓ Reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by increasing alternatives to driving alone.	
✤ Expand electric transportation infrastructure.	
✓ Promote innovative green building practices in design, materials selection, construction, and maintenance.	
✤ Encourage retrofitting of existing buildings to reduce building energy use.	

Land Use / Development Patterns

The plan should:	Page Reference
☑ Include the size of the center and describe whether the center boundary changed as part of the planning process. The plan should fully encompass the designated regional center and demonstrate defined boundaries and shape for the center, including consistency with size requirements for regional centers. Urban Growth Centers should be between 200-640 acres in	

	Page/Policy Reference
size. Metro Growth Centers should be between 320-640 acres in size (may be larger if served by an internal, high-capacity transit system).	
✓ Describe and map the mix, distribution, and location of existing and future land uses (such as residential, commercial, civic, public, etc.).	
☑ Include the existing activity unit[1] density of the center. Urban Growth Centers should have a minimum existing density of 18 activity units per acre. Metro Growth Centers should have a minimum existing density of 30 activity units per acre.	
⚙ Recognize the role of the center in achieving the adopted VISION 2050 goal of attracting 65% of regional population growth and 75% of employment growth to centers and high-capacity transit station areas.	
The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	**Page/Policy Reference**
☑ Establish residential and employment growth targets that accommodate a significant share of the jurisdiction's growth, in support of VISION 2050 and the Regional Growth Strategy. Residential densities and building intensities should have capacity to accommodate higher levels of growth. [2] Urban Growth Centers should plan for densities of at least 45 activity units per acre. Metro Growth Centers should plan for densities of at least 85 activity units per acre. **Please complete Table 1 below.**	
☑ Encourage a mix of complementary uses, with a goal for a minimum mix of at least 15% planned residential and employment activity in the center.	
✓ Establish design standards for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development and other transit-supportive planning that orients land uses around transit. Eliminate superblocks through innovative site design and public/private partnerships.	
✓ Promote infill development, particularly on underutilized parcels.	
✓ Increase access to opportunity, including employment and education opportunities and improved neighborhood quality of life.	

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[1] An activity unit is a person or a job.
[2] Growth targets are the amount of growth a jurisdiction has agreed, through the countywide process, to plan for throughout its comprehensive plan elements over the 20-year horizon of the comprehensive plan. The targets include both the baseline density (current) plus the 20-year growth. Distinct from growth targets, zoned development capacity is not time-bound and, therefore, can allow higher levels of development.

Table 1 Growth Targets	Existing (Baseline) Conditions	Adopted Center Growth Target*	Zoned Development Capacity (meet or exceed target)	Page Reference
Population				
Housing Units				
Employment				

*The plan's land use assumptions for travel modeling must be consistent with the adopted center growth targets.

Housing

The plan should:	Page Reference
⚙ Document the total existing housing units, including a breakdown by type, affordability (including subsidized housing), and special housing needs.	
✓ Assess future housing need in the center as part of the jurisdiction-wide housing needs assessment.	

The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	Page/Policy Reference
✓ Address density standards and development regulations to ensure a variety of housing types for all major household income categories are allowed.[3]	
✓ Demonstrate how housing targets and goals will be met.	
⚙ Reduce the risk of residential displacement through a variety of anti-displacement strategies, including leveraging growth opportunities to provide new affordable units and preserving existing affordable housing.	
✓ Encourage coordination with housing organizations and community groups to address issues of homelessness, fair housing, anti-displacement, etc. Partnering with housing program and service providers can promote more equitable housing opportunities within the center.	

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[3] VISION 2050 uses the following household income categories and definitions to track regional housing affordability: Middle (80-120% of area median income (AMI)); Moderate (50%-80% of AMI); Low (Below 50% of AMI); and Very Low (Below 30% of AMI).

Economy

The plan should:	Page Reference
✓ Describe key economic sectors and industry clusters in the center, including those recognized in the Regional Economic Strategy.	
☑ Demonstrate the center's market potential for accommodating future population and job growth.[4]	
The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	**Page/Policy Reference**
✓ Encourage the use of economic development tools to promote retention, expansion, and growth of employment opportunities within the center.	
☺ Reduce the risk of commercial displacement through a variety of anti-displacement strategies.	
☺ Expand access to economic opportunities through actions such as adopting a priority hire ordinance, encouraging workforce development partnerships, and identifying pipeline education or training opportunities.	

Transportation

The plan should:	Page Reference
☑ Describe relationships to regional high-capacity transit (including bus rapid transit, commuter rail, light rail, ferry, and express bus) and local transit. Existing and planned transit service in the center should be referenced.	
✓ Demonstrate coordination with transit agencies.	
✓ Identify planned transportation investments, programs, and resources, including transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and projects to eliminate superblocks or modal conflicts and promote safety and connectivity.	

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[4] A market study is recommended for all jurisdictions with centers. Market studies are required for designation of new centers and regional growth centers that have existing density levels below the level required for new centers at the time of the 2025 monitoring review. See pages 9-10 of the Regional Centers Framework for more information.

	Page/Policy Reference
✓ Include a map of existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities and determine what links are required to improve connectivity.	
✓ Include a map of the existing street pattern and determine what links are required to improve connectivity.	
✓ Include a mode-split goal.	
The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	**Page/Policy Reference**
✓ Support an integrated multimodal transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.	
✓ Plan for streets that serve all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, vehicles, and – where appropriate – freight.	
✓ Support context-sensitive design of transportation facilities.	
✓ Encourage environmentally friendly street ("green street") treatments.	
✓ Adopt level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions tailored for the center to encourage transit.	
✓ Establish a parking management strategy that addresses supply of parking, on-street parking, and mitigating effects of parking.	
✓ Identify strategies to achieve a mode-split goal that advances a more sustainable mix of auto, transit, and non-motorized trips.	

Public Services

The plan should:	Page Reference
✓ Describe or reference local capital plans for infrastructure specific to the center, as well as their financing (such as sewer, water, gas, electric, telecommunications).	
The plan should include policies and identify programs that:	**Page/Policy Reference**
✓ Ensure facilities are provided consistent with targeted growth.	
✓ Ensure availability of public services, including K-12 education, to meet the needs of businesses and residents.	

Discussion Questions | Innovation, Engagement, and Racial Equity

The following questions address the Regional Centers Framework's intention for more inclusive, equitable development and engagement in centers and the desired outcomes for equity. Responses are an opportunity for the jurisdiction to highlight the most noteworthy aspects of the plan and the planning process. Responses also help tell PSRC boards how the plan is working to implement VISION 2050 and how the plan meets certification requirements.

- How were different stakeholders (e.g., community members, business owners, tribes, ports, military installations, and special purpose districts, and adjacent jurisdictions, when applicable) engaged during the planning process? Were any new or innovative engagement techniques employed to reach historically underrepresented groups?

- How was racial equity considered in the planning process and addressed in the plan? Do you have examples of innovative policies that work to advance racial equity?

- Are there any additional innovative policies or programs to highlight from the center plan?