

APPENDIX 6 – King County Centers Designation Framework

| | Metro Growth Centers | Urban Growth Centers | Countywide Growth Centers | Industrial Employment Centers | Industrial Growth Centers | Countywide Industrial Centers |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| 1. Purpose of Center | Regional Metro Growth Centers have a primary regional role. They have dense existing jobs and housing, high quality transit service, and are planning for significant, equitable growth and opportunity. They serve as major transit hubs for the region and provide regional services and serve as major civic and cultural centers. | Regional Urban Growth Centers play an important regional role, with dense existing jobs and housing, high- quality transit service, and planning for significant, equitable growth and opportunity. These centers may represent areas where major investments – such as high-capacity transit –offer new opportunities for growth. | Countywide growth centers ¹ serve important roles as places for equitably concentrating jobs, housing, shopping, and recreational opportunities. These are often smaller downtowns, high-capacity transit station areas, or neighborhood centers that are linked by transit, provide a mix of housing and services, and serve as focal points for local and county investment. | Regional Industrial Employment Centers are highly active industrial areas with significant existing jobs, core industrial activity, evidence of long-term demand, and regional role. They have a legacy of industrial employment and represent important long-term industrial areas, such as deep-water ports and major manufacturing and can be accessed by transit. Designation is to, at a minimum, preserve existing industrial jobs and land use and to continue to equitably grow industrial employment and opportunity in these centers where possible. | Regional Industrial Growth Centers are clusters of industrial lands that have significant value to the region and potential for future equitable job growth. These large areas of industrial land serve the region with international employers, industrial infrastructure, concentrations of industrial jobs, evidence of long-term potential, and can be accessed by transit. Designation will continue growth of industrial employment and preserve the region’s industrial land base for long-term growth and retention. | Countywide industrial centers serve as important local industrial areas. These areas support equitable access to living wage jobs and serve a key role in the county’s manufacturing/industrial economy. |
| 2. Distribution of Centers | Centers are designated to achieve the countywide land use vision and are based on meeting the expectations of the framework. No arbitrary limit on the number of centers will be established. | Same | Same | Same | Same | Same |
| PART 1. DESIGNATION PROCESS AND SCHEDULE | | | | | | |
| A. Designation Process | | | | | | |
| 1. jurisdiction ordinance, motion, or resolution authorizing submittal of application | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. Fill out Form | Yes | Yes | KC to have an application form and process. | Yes | Yes | KC to have an application form and process. |
| 3. Submit for eligibility review. Staff review and report | Yes | Yes | IJT staff to review and present to GMPC. | Yes | Yes | IJT staff to review and present to GMPC. |
| 4. GMPC recommendation to PSRC | Yes | Yes | KC to have an application form and process. | Yes | Yes | KC to have an application form and process. |
| B. Schedule | | | | | | |
| 1. Applications limited to major updates. Call for new application approx. every 5 years. | Yes | Yes | Yes. KC to have a 5 year cycle, or consider following PSRC major plan updates. | Yes | Yes | Yes. KC to have a 5 year cycle or consider following PSRC major plan updates. |
| C. Redesignation | | | | | | |
| 1. Follows PSRC re-designation process | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

¹ King County does not yet have designated countywide centers, although many jurisdictions have local centers that may be equivalent. Local centers are eligible for regional and countywide funding, and this funding is distributed based on criteria and formula.

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|---|---|---|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| PART 2: CENTER ELIGIBILITY | | | | | | |
| A. Local and Countywide Commitment | | | | | | |
| 1. center identified in Comprehensive Plan | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. demonstrate center is local priority for growth and investments | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes. And, commitment to protecting and preserving industrial uses, strategies and incentives to encourage industrial uses in the center, and established partnerships with relevant parties to ensure success of manufacturing/industrial center. | Yes. And area has important county role and concentration of industrial land or jobs with evidence of long-term demand. |
| B. Planning | | | | | | |
| 1. completed center plan meeting Plan Review Manual specifications ² | Yes | Yes | Yes ³ | Yes | Yes. And, in consultation with public ports and other affected government entities. | Yes ³ |
| 2. environmental review shows area appropriate for density | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 3. assessment of housing need and cultural assets, including displacement of residents and businesses | Yes | Yes | Yes, as part of subarea plan | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| 4. documentation of tools to provide range of affordable and fair housing | Yes | Yes | Yes, as part of subarea plan | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| 5. documentation of community engagement, including with priority populations ⁴ | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| C. Jurisdiction and Location | | | | | | |
| 1. new Centers should be in cities | Yes | Yes | Cities or Unincorporated Urban | Yes | Yes | Cities or Unincorporated Urban |
| 2. if unincorporated area: a. it has link light rail and is affiliated for annexation | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Encouraged | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Encouraged |
| b. joint planning is occurring | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Encouraged | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Encouraged |
| c. plans for annexation or incorporation are required | Not applicable (center type does not exist in unincorporated area). | Not applicable (center type does not exist in unincorporated area). | Encouraged | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Not allowed in unincorporated urban area | Encouraged |

² The PSRC *Center Plan Checklist* defines key concepts and provisions jurisdictions should use in planning for the designated centers. This includes the following: establishing a vision, considering natural and built environment topics, establishing geographic boundaries and growth targets, planning for a mix of land uses, addressing design standards, planning for a variety of housing types including affordable housing in growth centers, addressing economic development, and providing for public services and facilities, including multimodal transportation, all as appropriate and tailored to the center type and function.

³ For Countywide Centers, until such time as the Plan Review Manual is completed, the requirements can be met through inclusion of a chapter in the Comprehensive Plan that specifies how each required topic is addressed for each countywide center, rather than in stand-alone subarea plans.

⁴ King County's "Fair and Just" Ordinance 16948, as amended, identifies four demographic groups, including: low-income, limited English proficiency, people of color, and immigrant populations.

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| D. Existing Conditions | | | | | | |
| 1. infrastructure and utilities can support growth | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes. Must include presence of irreplaceable industrial infrastructure such as working maritime port facilities, air and rail freight facilities. | Yes. Access to relevant transportation infrastructure including freight. | Yes |
| 2. center has mix of housing and employment | Yes | Yes | Yes | Same | The center has an economic impact. | Same |
| E. Boundaries | | | | | | |
| 1. justification for center boundaries | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. boundary generally round or square | Yes | Yes | Compact, walkable size | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| F. Transportation | | | | | | |
| 1. center has bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and amenities | Yes | Yes | Yes. Supports multi-modal transportation, including pedestrian infrastructure and amenities, and bicycle infrastructure and amenities. | Defined transportation demand management strategies in place. | Defined transportation demand management strategies in place. | Defined transportation demand management strategies in place |
| 2. center has street pattern supporting walkability | Yes | Yes | Yes. Supports multi-modal transportation, including street pattern that supports walkability. | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| 3. freight access | Yes | To be addressed in subarea plan | To be addressed in subarea plan | Access to relevant transportation infrastructure including freight. | Same | To be addressed in subarea plan |
| PART 3: CENTER CRITERIA | | | | | | |
| A. Purpose | | | | | | |
| 1. Compatibility with VISION centers concept, Regional Growth Strategy and Multicounty Planning Policies | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| B. Activity level/Zoning ⁵ | | | | | | |
| 1. existing activity ⁶ | 60 activity unit density | 30 activity unit density (AUs refer to combined jobs and population) | 18 activity unit density | 10,000 jobs | 4,000 jobs | 1,000 existing jobs and/or 500 acres of industrial land |
| 2. planned activity | Above 120 activity unit density | 60 activity unit density | 30 activity unit density | 20,000 jobs | 10,000 jobs | 4,000 jobs |
| 3. sufficient zoned capacity | Yes. Can Should be higher than target and supports a compact, complete and mature urban form. | Yes. Can Should be higher than target. | Should have capacity and be planning for additional growth | Yes. Should be higher than target. | Yes. Should be higher than target. | Should have capacity and be planning for additional growth. |
| 4. planning mix of housing types and employment types | Planning for at least 15% residential and 15% employment activity | Planning for at least 15% residential and 15% employment activity | Planning for at least 20% residential and 20% employment, unless unique circumstances make these percentages not possible to achieve. | At least 50% of the employment must be industrial employment. Strategies to retain industrial uses are in place. | At least 50% of the employment must be industrial employment. Strategies to retain industrial uses are in place. | At least 50% of the employment must be industrial employment. Strategies to retain industrial uses are in place. |
| C. Geographic Size | | | | | | |
| 1. minimum size | 320 acres | 200 acres | 160 | No set threshold; size based on justification for the boundary. | 2000 acres | 1,000 existing jobs and/or 500 acres of industrial land |
| 2. maximum size | 640 acres (larger if internal HCT) | 640 acres (larger if internal HCT) | 500 acres | No set threshold; size based on justification for the boundary. | No set threshold; size based on justification for the boundary. | No set threshold; size based on justification for the boundary. |

⁵ PSRC's 2015 guidance on *Transit Supportive Densities and Land Uses* cites an optimal level of 56-116 activity units per acre to support light rail, dependent on transit costs per mile. The guidance indicates an optimal threshold of at least 17 activity units per acre to support bus rapid transit. Note: the existing threshold in the CPPs is roughly equivalent to 85 AUs existing activity for King County Urban Centers.

⁶ For existing centers, not meeting existing activity unit thresholds is not grounds for de-designation or re-designation by the Growth Management Planning Council.

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| D. Transit | | | | | | |
| 1. existing or planned transit service levels | Major transit hub, has high quality/high capacity existing or planned service including existing or planned light rail, commuter rail, ferry, or other high capacity transit with similar frequent service as light rail. (18 hours, 15-minute headways) | Fixed route bus, regional bus, Bus Rapid Transit or frequent all-day bus service (16 hours, 15 minute headways). High-capacity transit may substitute for fixed route bus. | Yes, has frequent, all-day, fixed-route bus service (16 hours, 15-minute headways). | Must have existing or planned frequent, local, express, or flexible transit service. Should have documented strategies to reduce commute impacts through transportation demand management that are consistent with the Regional TDM Action Plan. | Same. | Should have local fixed-route or flexible transit service. |
| 2. transit supportive infrastructure | Provides transit priority (bus lanes, queue jumps, signal priority, etc.) within the right-of-way to maintain speed and reliability of transit service. Provides infrastructure (i.e. pedestrian and bicycle) that improves rider access to transit service and increases amenities to make transit an inviting option. | Provides transit priority (bus lanes, queue jumps, signal priority, etc.) within the right-of-way to maintain speed and reliability of transit service. Provides infrastructure (i.e. pedestrian and bicycle) that improves rider access to transit service and increases amenities to make transit an inviting option. | Supports connection/transfers between routes and other modes. Provides infrastructure (i.e. pedestrian and bicycle) that improves rider access to transit service and increases amenities to make transit an inviting option. | Provides transit priority (bus lanes, queue jumps, signal priority, etc.) within the right-of-way to maintain speed and reliability of transit service. Provides infrastructure (i.e. pedestrian and bicycle) that improves rider access to transit service and increases amenities to make transit an inviting option. | Supports connection/transfers between routes and other modes, and increases amenities to make transit an inviting option. | Supports connection/transfers between routes and other modes, and increases amenities to make transit an inviting option. |
| E. Market Potential | | | | | | |
| 1. Evidence of future market potential to support target and planned densities | Yes, with Market Study required | Yes, with Market Study required | Market Study encouraged | Yes, with Market Study required | Yes, with Market Study required | Market Study encouraged |
| 2. Market data will inform adoption of land use, housing, economic development, and investment strategies, including equitable development strategies. ⁷ | Required within Market Study | Required within Market Study | Encouraged within Market Study | Required within Market Study, tailored for industrial employment. | Required within Market Study, tailored for industrial employment. | Encouraged within Market Study, tailored for industrial employment. |
| F. Role | | | | | | |
| 1. Evidence of regional or countywide role by serving as important destination | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. Planning for long-term, significant, and equitable growth | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| G. Zoning | | | | | | |
| 1. specific zones required | No | No | No | At least 75% land area zoned for core industrial uses. This includes manufacturing, transportation, warehousing and freight terminals. | Same | At least 75% of land area zoned for core industrial uses. |
| 2. specific zones prohibited | No | No | No | Commercial uses within core industrial zones shall be strictly limited. | Same | Same |

⁷ For residential development, strategies and tools could include mandatory inclusionary housing, multifamily tax exemption, or others. For commercial and industrial development, strategies and tools could include priority hire policies, incentives for affordable commercial space, or others.