

Centers

CENTERS OVERVIEW

The Puget Sound regional growth strategy identifies Centers as an integral feature for accommodating residential and employment growth. The strategy describes Regional Growth Centers and other Centers that may be designated. Regional Growth Centers, once regionally designated, are located either in Metropolitan Cities or in Core Cities. The strategy also identifies Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Centers, which consist primarily of manufacturing and industrial uses.

Centers are areas of concentrated employment and/or housing within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) which serve as the hubs of transit and transportation systems. Centers and connecting corridors are integral to creating compact urban development that conserves resources and creates additional transportation, housing, and shopping choices. Centers are an important part of the regional strategy for urban growth and are required to be addressed in the Countywide Planning Policies. Centers are, or will become, focal points for growth within the county's UGA and are areas where public investment is directed.

C-1. The purpose of Regional Growth Centers and Countywide Centers is to:

- **Be priority locations for accommodating growth;**
- **strengthen existing development patterns;**
- **promote housing opportunities close to employment;**
- **support development of an extensive multimodal transportation system which reduces dependency on automobiles;**
- **reduce congestion and improve air quality; and**
- **maximize the benefit of public investment in infrastructure and services.**

C-2. The purpose of Manufacturing/Industrial Centers is to:

- **Recognize strategically located concentrations of industrial activity as essential resources for the local economy;**
- **protect and leverage critical and difficult to replace freight infrastructure;**
- **preserve the industrial land base in the long term;**
- **support family/living wage jobs;**
- **emphasize the importance of freight movement; and**
- **preserve the county's supply of industrial land.**

C-3. Centers function as anchors within the region for a high density mix of business, residential, public, cultural and recreational uses, and day and night activity that provide a sense of place and community. They are characterized by their role as the central business districts and regional centers of commerce. Centers may also serve national or international roles.

C-4. Manufacturing Industrial Centers (MICs) preserve lands for family-wage jobs in basic industries and trade, and provide areas where that employment may grow in the future. MICs form a critical regional resource that provides economic diversity, supports national

and international trade, generates substantial revenue for local governments, and offers higher than average wages.

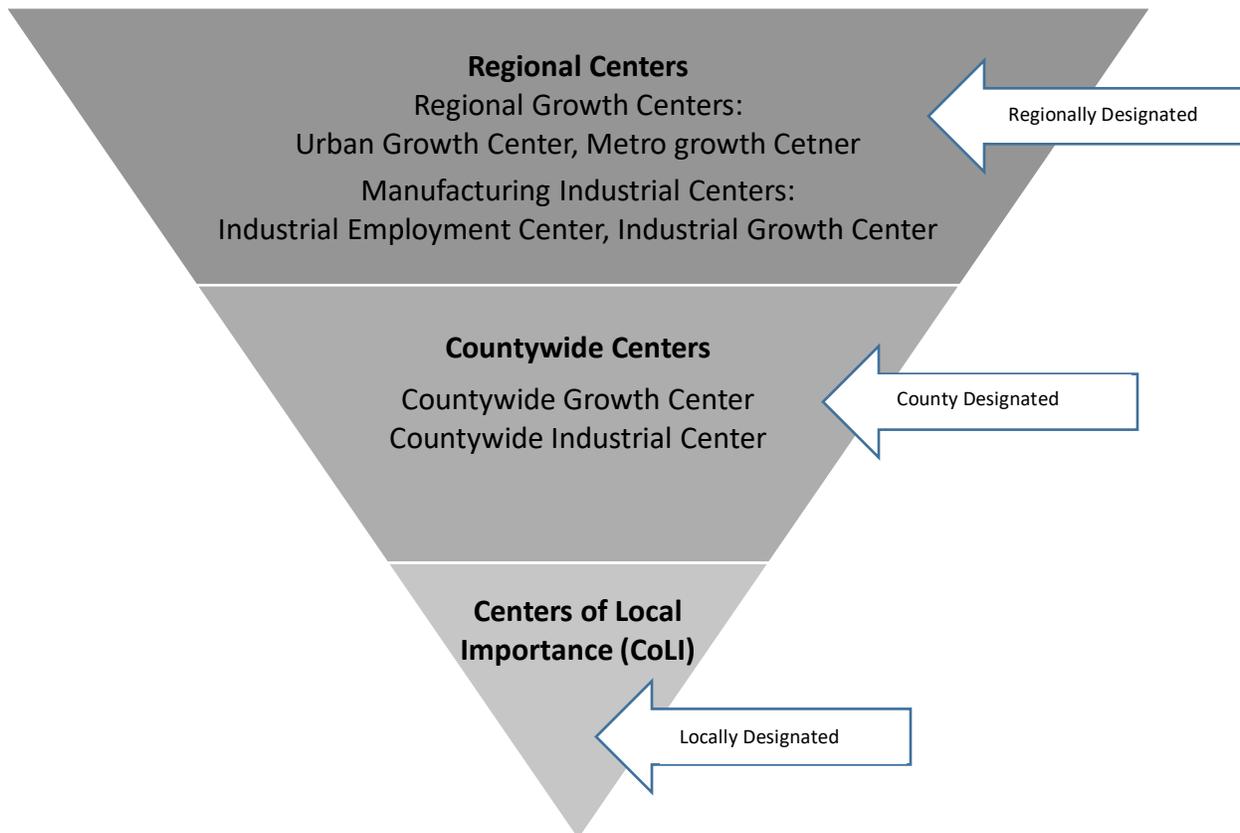
C-5. Transportation and economic development funds should be prioritized for transportation and infrastructure supporting Centers in Pierce County. Projects that support Regional Growth and/or Manufacturing Industrial Centers (and Candidates), support more than one center, and benefit a variety of user groups will be given higher consideration.

C-6. Centers must be identified in a Comprehensive Plan with information about the type of Center and the specific geographic boundaries. Capital improvements must be present and available, or be planned and financed, consistent with the expected rate of growth. Such improvements include, but are not limited to, roads, sewers and other utilities, schools, parks, and open space. In order to provide balance between higher intensity of use within Centers, public and/or private open space shall be provided.

TYPES OF CENTERS

Centers must meet minimum designation criteria, which includes the criteria of the lower category Center type. For example, a Regional Center must meet the designation criteria for a Regional Center as well as the criteria for a Countywide Center.

In March 2018, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) adopted the Regional Centers Framework Update that established new eligibility and criteria for Regional Centers. Jurisdictions must adhere to the latest eligibility and designation criteria for new Regional Centers as adopted by PSRC.



CENTER DESIGNATION AUTHORITY

Regional Centers must be approved by Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), in addition to Pierce County Regional Council (PCRC) by amending the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).

Countywide Centers and Centers of Local Importance (CoLI) are approved by the Pierce County Regional Council by amending the Countywide Planning Policies.

CENTER DESIGNATION PROCESS

Pierce County and any municipality in the County that is planning to include county or regionally designated Center within its boundaries shall specifically define the area of such Center within its Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan shall include policies aimed at focusing growth within the Center and along corridors consistent with the applicable criteria contained within the Countywide Planning Policies. The County or municipality shall adopt regulations that reinforce the Center’s designation.

Beginning in 2019 and once every two years thereafter, the Pierce County Regional Council (PCRC) shall invite jurisdictions to submit requests for designation of new Centers. Said request shall be processed in accordance with established procedures for amending the Countywide Planning Policies.

Each jurisdiction seeking designate a new Countywide Center shall provide the PCRC with a report demonstrating that the proposed Center:

- 1. Meets the basic standards for designation;
- 2. Is characterized and defined in the local Comprehensive Plan;
- 3. Is consistent with the applicable Countywide Planning Policies, and
- 4. Is supported and served by adopted local development regulations.

The minimum criteria report and statement shall be reviewed by the Growth Management Coordinating Committee (GMCC) for consistency with Countywide Planning Policies, the Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC) for consistency with transportation improvements plans of WSDOT, and with Pierce Transit’s Comprehensive Plan. The coordinating committees shall provide joint recommendation to the PCRC.

Once included in the Countywide Planning Policies, the jurisdiction where a Center is located may go on to seek regional designation of the Center from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Jurisdictions must adhere to the latest eligibility, designation criteria, and process for new Regional Growth Centers as adopted by PSRC as they prepare applications for new Center designation. Countywide Centers should be reviewed for consistency and countywide concurrence prior to submitting for regional designation.

After the Center is designated as a Countywide center within the Countywide Planning Policies and until regional-level designation by the PSRC occurs the Center shall be considered a “candidate” Regional Growth Center or Manufacturing/Industrial Center.

Each jurisdiction which designates a Regional Growth Center shall establish 20-year household and employment growth targets for that Center. The expected range of targets will reflect the diversity of the various Centers and allow communities to effectively plan for needed services. The target ranges not only set a policy for the level of growth envisioned for each Center, but also for the timing and funding of infrastructure improvements. Reaching the target ranges will require careful planning of public investment and providing incentives for private investments.

Amending an Existing Countywide Center

Once a Center has been designated in the Countywide Planning Policies, the affiliated jurisdiction may request an amendment to the Center. The Center amendment process shall be limited to a vote of the PCRC through submission of a report explaining the requested amendment and affirming that the amended Center will be consistent with the Countywide Center basic standards and the Countywide Planning Policies.

Urban Growth Outside of Centers

A variety of urban land uses and areas of growth will occur outside of designated Centers but within the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Local land use plans will guide the location, scale, timing and design of development within UGAs. The UGA will be where the majority of future growth and development will be targeted. Development should be encouraged which complements the desired focus of growth into Centers and supports a multimodal transportation system. For example, policies which encourage infill and revitalization of communities would help to achieve the regional and statewide objectives of a compact and concentrated development pattern within urban areas. The Countywide Planning Policies provide guidance for development and the provision of urban services to support development within the UGA. Jurisdictions with Centers should plan connections with adjacent neighborhoods and other centers to encourage access to Centers and connectivity across the county.

REGIONAL GROWTH CENTERS (RGCs)

Regional Growth Centers are locations of more compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of housing, jobs, retail, services, and other destinations. The region's plans identify Centers as areas that should receive a significant share of the region's population and employment growth compared with other parts of the urban area, while providing improved access and mobility—especially for walking, biking, and transit.

Regional Growth Centers are locations that include a dense mix of business, commercial, residential and cultural activity within a compact area. Regional Growth Centers are targeted for employment and residential growth, and provide excellent transportation service, including fast, convenient high capacity transit service, as well as investment in major public amenities.

The following Pierce County Regional Growth Centers have been adopted into the PSRC Regional Growth Strategy:

- Tacoma Central Business District
- Tacoma Mall
- Lakewood
- Puyallup Downtown
- Puyallup South Hill
- University Place

C-7. The County and each jurisdiction that designates a Center within its Comprehensive Plan shall encourage density and development to achieve targeted growth. Any of the following approaches could be used to implement Center development:

1. Encouraging higher residential densities within Centers;
2. Avoiding creation of large blocks of single-use zones;
3. Allowing for greater intensity of use within Centers;
4. Increasing building heights, greater floor/area ratios within Centers;
5. Minimizing setbacks within Centers;
6. Allowing buildings to locate close to street to enhance pedestrian accessibility; and
7. Encouraging placement of parking to rear of structures.

C-8. Designated Centers are expected to receive a significant share of projected growth in conjunction with periodic disaggregation of Countywide population allocations.

C-9. Centers shall provide necessary capital facilities needed to accommodate the projected growth in population and employment.

C-10. Streetscape amenities (landscaping, furniture, etc.) should be provided within Centers to create a walkable environment.

C-11. To encourage transit use within Centers, jurisdictions should establish mechanisms to limit the use of single occupancy vehicles. Such mechanisms could include:

1. charges for parking;
2. limiting the number of off-street parking spaces;
3. establishing minimum and maximum parking requirements;
4. commute trip reduction (CTR) measures and other transportation demand management measures;
5. development of commuter programs for multiple employers not otherwise affected by the CTR law; and
6. providing nonmotorized transportation facilities.

C-12. Centers receive a high priority for the location of high-capacity transit stations and/or transit Centers.

C-13. Higher residential densities and uses that support high density residential should be located close to transit stops within Centers and seek opportunities to:

1. create a core area to support transit and high occupancy vehicle use;
2. allow/encourage all types of transit facilities (transit Centers, bus pullouts, etc.) within Centers; and
3. establish incentives for developers to provide transit and transportation demand management supportive amenities.

C-14. Provisions for non-motorized transportation shall be provided, such as:

1. bicycle-friendly roadway design;
2. wider outside lane or shared parking/bike lanes;
3. bike-activated signals;
4. covered, secure bicycle parking at all places of employment;
5. bicycle racks; and
6. pedestrian pathways.

C-15. Jurisdictions should consider incentives for development within Centers such as:

1. streamlined permitting;
2. financial incentives;
3. density bonuses or transfer of development rights;
4. using SEPA provisions to streamline environmental review; and
5. shared mitigation such as stormwater detention and joint parking.

C-16. Regional Growth Centers should be planned to have fast and frequent high capacity transit, as well as other modes of transportation options.

C-17. Jurisdictions should individually and collectively coordinate with transit agencies to improve transit service infrastructure and efficiency within and between Countywide and Regional Centers.

C-18. Roadways and nonmotorized networks should be designed to promote efficient transit services.

C.19. Designation Requirements for Regional Growth Centers (RGCs)

1. Consistency with specific criteria for Centers adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies;
2. Consistency with the Puget Sound Regional Council's current Regional Growth Center criteria;
3. The Center's location in the County and its potential for fostering a logical and desirable Countywide transportation system and distribution of Centers;
4. Consideration of the total number of Centers in the County that can be reasonably developed based on projected growth over the next twenty years;
5. Environmental analysis which shall include demonstration that urban services including an adequate supply of drinking water are available to serve projected growth within the Center and that the jurisdiction is capable of ensuring concurrent urban services to new development;
6. If a jurisdiction designates a Center, it must also adopt the Center's designation and provisions in its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure that growth targeted to Centers is achieved and urban services will be provided;
7. Centers shall be characterized by all of the following:
 - Clearly defined geographic boundaries;
 - Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support high-capacity transit;
 - A diversity of land uses;
 - Pedestrian-oriented land uses and amenities;
 - Pedestrian connections shall be provided throughout;

- Urban design standards which reflect the local community;
- Provisions to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use, especially during peak hours and commute times;
- Provisions for bicycle use;
- Sufficient public open spaces and recreational opportunities, including placemaking and public gathering places;
- Uses which provide both daytime and nighttime activities; and
- Located in urban growth areas.

REGIONAL MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRIAL CENTERS (MICs)

Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Centers are areas where employee- or land-intensive uses are located. These Centers differ from Regional Growth Centers in that they consist of an extensive land base and the exclusion of non-manufacturing or manufacturing-supportive uses is an essential feature of their character. These areas are characterized by a significant amount of manufacturing, industrial, and advanced technology employment uses. Large retail and non-related office uses are discouraged. Other than caretakers' residences, housing is prohibited within Manufacturing/Industrial Centers. However, these Centers should be linked to high density housing areas by an efficient multimodal transportation system. The efficiency of rail and overland freight to markets is the critical element for manufacturers and industries located in these Centers.

The following Manufacturing/Industrial Centers have been adopted into the Regional Growth Strategy for Pierce County:

- Frederickson
- Port of Tacoma
- Sumner/Pacific
- *South Tacoma – Candidate Manufacturing/Industrial Center*

C-20. Provisions to achieve targeted employment growth should include:

- 1. Preservation and encouragement of the aggregation of vacant land parcels sized for manufacturing/industrial uses;**
- 2. Prohibition of land uses which are not compatible with manufacturing/industrial, manufacturing/industrial supportive, and advanced technology uses;**
- 3. Limiting the size and number of offices and retail uses as accessory use and only to serve the needs of employees within Center; and**
- 4. Reuse and/or intensification of the land use consistent with the mix of uses envisioned for the MIC.**

C-21. The transportation network within Manufacturing/Industrial Centers should provide for the needs of freight movement and employees by ensuring a variety of transportation modes such as roads, rail, and various trucking facilities. Non-motorized facilities and transit services should be creatively provided when it makes sense and is safe providing the MIC with alternative transportation to single occupancy vehicles (SOVs), and transportation demand management strategies if transit is unavailable or is not feasible.

C-22. The transportation system, including but not limited to: road, rail, dock, and port terminal, within Manufacturing/Industrial Centers shall be built, protected, and maintained. to accommodate existing and future industrial uses.

C-23. All jurisdictions should support transportation capital improvement projects which improve access and movement of goods to, in, and from Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.

C-24. To be designated as a Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center (MICs), the following criteria shall be met.

1. Consistency with specific criteria for Manufacturing/Industrial Centers adopted within the Countywide Planning Policies and the Multi-County Planning Policies;
2. Consideration of the Center's location in the County and region, especially relative to existing and proposed transportation facilities;
3. Consideration of the total number of Manufacturing/Industrial Centers in the County that are needed over the next twenty years based on projected need for manufacturing/industrial land to satisfy regional projections of demand for manufacturing/industrial land uses;
4. Environmental analysis which shall include demonstration that the jurisdiction is capable of concurrent service to new development; and
5. Adoption within the jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan of the Center's designation and provisions to ensure that job growth targeted to the Manufacturing/Industrial Center is achieved.
6. Manufacturing/Industrial Centers shall be characterized by the following:
 - a. Clearly defined geographic boundaries;
 - b. Intensity of land uses sufficient to support alternatives to single-occupant vehicle use;
 - c. Direct access to regional highway, rail, air and/or waterway systems for the movement of goods;
 - d. Provisions to prohibit housing; and
 - e. Identified transportation linkages to high-density housing areas.
7. Jurisdictions having a designated Manufacturing/Industrial Center shall:
 - a. Plan for and fund capital facility improvement projects which support the movement of goods;
 - b. Coordinate with utility providers to ensure that utility facilities are available to serve such Centers;
 - c. Provide buffers around the Center to reduce conflicts with adjacent land uses;
 - d. Facilitate land assembly;
 - e. Assist in recruiting appropriate businesses; and
 - f. Encourage employers to participate in commute trip reduction program.

COUNTYWIDE CENTERS

Through the 2018 Centers Framework Update, designation of Countywide Centers remains delegated to a Countywide process while a baseline of consistent regional standards for each county to use was adopted. PSRC reviews and certifies Countywide planning policies, but PSRC's role does not include review of Countywide Centers.

Designated Centers may vary substantially in the number of households and jobs they contain today. The intent of the Countywide Planning Policies is that Centers become attractive places to live and work, while supporting efficient public services such as transit and being responsive to the local market for jobs and housing.

Countywide Growth Centers serve important roles as places for 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.

Countywide Industrial Centers serve as important local industrial areas. These areas support living wage jobs and serve a key role in the county's manufacturing/industrial economy.

Within Pierce County, a limited number of additional Centers may be designated through amendment of the Countywide Planning Policies consistent with the basic standards and process included below.

C-25. Countywide Centers are local focal points where people come together for a variety of activities, including business, shopping, living and recreation. These Centers may include the core of small to medium-sized cities and may also be located in unincorporated urban areas. Often Countywide Centers include a strong public presence because they are the location of city hall, main street, and other public spaces.

C-26. A jurisdiction may apply for status as a candidate Countywide Center if it satisfies all required criteria included below, has a minimum of 7 activity units per acre, and is planning for at least 16 activity units per acre. The application for Countywide Center would not be regionally designated until the Center achieves at least 10 activity units per acre. Activity units means the sum of population and jobs units per gross acre per PSRC.

C-27. Countywide Centers are potential candidates for designation as Regional Centers.

Pierce County has the following Countywide Centers:

Countywide Growth Centers

- [None]

Countywide Industrial Centers

- South Tacoma – Candidate Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center

C.28. To be designated as a Countywide Center the following criteria shall be met.	
Countywide Growth Center	Countywide Industrial Center
<p>Center must meet each the following criteria:</p> <p>Identified as a Center in the local Comprehensive Plan and adopted regulations.</p> <p>Identified as a Countywide Center in the Countywide Planning Policies</p> <p>Located within a city, multiple adjacent cities, or unincorporated urban area</p>	<p>Center must meet each the following criteria:</p> <p>Identified as a Center in the local Comprehensive Plan and adopted regulations.</p> <p>Identified as a Countywide Center in the Countywide Planning Policies</p> <p>Located within a city, multiple adjacent cities, or unincorporated urban area</p>
<p>Demonstration that the Center is a local planning and investment priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identified as a Countywide Center in a local comprehensive plan; subarea plan recommended o Clear evidence that area is a local priority for investment, such as planning efforts or infrastructure <p>The Center is a location for compact, mixed-use development; including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A minimum existing activity unit density of 10 activity units per acre o Planning and zoning for a minimum mix of uses of 20 percent high density residential and 20 percent employment, unless unique circumstances make these percentages not possible to achieve. o Capacity and planning for additional growth of 16 activity units per acre or more. <p>The Center supports multi-modal transportation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Transit service** o Pedestrian infrastructure and amenities o Street pattern that supports walkability o Bicycle infrastructure and amenities o Compact, walkable size of one-quarter mile squared (160 acres), up to half-mile transit walkshed (500 acres) 	<p>Demonstration that the Center is a local planning and investment priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identified as a Countywide Center in a local comprehensive plan; subarea plan recommended o Clear evidence that area is a local priority for investment, such as planning efforts, or infrastructure <p>The Center supports industrial sector employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Minimum 1,000 existing jobs and/or 500 acres of industrial land o Defined transportation demand management strategies in place o At least 75% of land area zoned for core industrial uses* o Industrial retention strategies in place o Capacity and planning for additional growth o Important county role and concentration of industrial land or jobs with evidence of long-term demand

*“Core industrial uses”: Core industrial zoning is characterized by allowing, and preferring, most industrial uses. Incompatible land uses are generally prohibited but may be allowed in limited instances.

**Transit is defined as existing or planned options such as bus, train, or ferry service.

CENTERS OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE (COLIs)

CoLIs are designated for the purpose of identifying local Centers and activity nodes that are consistent with PSRC Multi-County Planning Policies. Such areas promote compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of uses, proximity to diverse services, and a variety of appropriate housing options, or be in an established industrial area.

A CoLI is characterized by a concentration of land uses or activities that provide a sense of place or gathering place for the community and neighborhood residents. A CoLI should include two or more of the following characteristics:

- Civic services
- Commercial areas
- Recreational areas
- Industrial areas
- Cultural facilities/activities
- Historic buildings or sites
- Residential areas

C-29. CoLIs may only be located in a town or city without a Countywide or Regional Center located in Pierce County. CoLIs may be allowed in an urban unincorporated area.

C-30. Local comprehensive plans should include policies that direct development regulations, including zoning, of the CoLI to uses that provide a focal point or sense of place for a community and its surrounding area.

C-31. The size of a CoLI and the mix and density of uses are to be locally determined to meet community goals.

C-32. Each jurisdiction defines the role that the CoLI plays in supporting planned growth.

C-33. A variety of appropriate transportation options and walkable design should be available or planned within a CoLI.

A CoLI shall be locally adopted; approval by the PCRC or other regional organization shall not be required.

- A jurisdiction shall document how an area meets the Design Features of a CoLI in its Comprehensive Plan.
- The documentation should include examples, plans, or other information that supports the designation of a CoLI.
- An area adopted as a CoLI shall be definitively delineated on a map within a jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan.
- A CoLI shall have appropriate land use designations, zoning regulations, and infrastructure plans for existing and planned development.
- A Comprehensive Plan that utilizes an alternative label to refer to a CoLI shall be accompanied with adopted findings of fact that recognizes the area as a CoLI per the Pierce County CPPs.

A jurisdiction shall provide the PCRC notice of its intention to locally adopt a CoLI or recognize formally adopted CoLIs that meet the criteria.

1. The notice shall be provided to the PCRC 60 days (minimum) prior to the expected dated of adoption.
2. The notice shall provide information that identifies the location of the proposed CoLI and documents how the location meets the CoLI policies.

A locally adopted CoLI will be recognized in the Countywide Planning Policies Appendix. Jurisdictions shall forward a map of locally adopted CoLIs together with the Comprehensive Plan citations to the PCRC for inclusion into Appendix B. The adopted CoLIs shall be attached to the CPP publications as Appendix B for ease of reference. Appendix B shall not be considered a component of the CPPs and, accordingly, an update to Appendix B shall not constitute an amendment to the CPPs requiring ratification by Pierce County jurisdictions.