

**Informational Paper Describing Current and Future Land Uses in the  
Central Puget Sound Region's Regional Growth Centers**

---

**KING COUNTY**

**Auburn Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Historic Main Street is considered an important asset for the city because buildings along this street have retained their original scale and form. Auburn Regional Medical Center, the largest employer and economic generator, is located just off of Main Street. Main Street is well lit, but the remainder of the downtown area is dark and isolated. Retail throughout Auburn is discontinuous, with a lack of connections within downtown districts. Many properties are underutilized and include few pedestrian amenities. A mix of industrial and single-family residential uses is located east of the historic Main Street district. A defined pedestrian environment does not exist off of Main Street, and residential and retail areas are poorly connected.

Future land use will likely vary throughout Auburn. According to the 2001 Auburn Downtown Plan/Final EIS, about one-third of the area is planned for mixed-use development, including retail, service, residential, office, and government uses. Medical and office uses are planned to border the mixed-use development to the north, and the eastern section of Auburn is planned for auto-oriented commercial uses. The remaining land is dedicated primarily to future residential uses, with a small business park area (Auburn, 2001).

**Burien Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Burien encompasses approximately 353 acres and is designed on a traditional street grid. The average block size is less than 4 acres, which is a scale appropriate for pedestrians. A mix of land uses exist within Burien, and the Burien Transit Center connects it to the rest of the region. Burien's pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not well connected. Bicycle facilities are limited and are not connected comprehensively. Several areas lack sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, and existing sidewalks are often in poor or fair condition. (Burien, 2004).

Future land use in Burien will likely be devoted primarily to a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment in the downtown core. Uses may include high-density residential development, retail, office, commercial, government, cultural and entertainment. More land-intensive, auto-oriented commercial development is planned to occupy the area east of Burien's core. The western edge of the core is planned to be a mix of moderate-intensity commercial uses to serve planned multi-family residential development to the south (Burien, 2005).

## **Downtown Bellevue Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan Suburban City)**

Downtown Bellevue was platted in large “superblocks” characteristic of post-war, auto-oriented development patterns. Today, the average block size is very large and roads are typically very wide, but most have well-constructed sidewalks. The City of Bellevue has been trying to break up the large blocks with additional pedestrian walkways. Large surface parking areas are a hindrance to compact development. A small section of historic Main Street continues to thrive as a pedestrian-oriented specialty retail area.

Current land use in Downtown Bellevue is predominantly commercial (31 percent) and office (18 percent). Parks and open space make up 5 percent and multi-family residential accounts for another 5 percent. Vacant land makes up nearly 8 percent (about 32 acres). Altogether, employment-related land uses comprise 54 percent of its land use.

In its Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Bellevue is envisioned as the most intensively developed downtown district of King County’s Eastside. It has a variety of high-intensity uses, such as multi-family residential development, regional office and retail uses, and civic and institutional uses (Bellevue, 2002).

## **Federal Way Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Most of Federal Way is currently developed with low-intensity uses. Buildings are dispersed throughout the area, and many lack pedestrian connections to each other and to public rights-of-way. Current land use patterns favor auto-oriented commercial activity. Existing development in Federal Way is typically one story, with off-street surface parking generally located between streets and structures. Few blocks in the Federal Way have sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, or other amenities that support a comfortable pedestrian environment. A city inventory revealed a general lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The primary land use in Federal Way is retail (70 percent) followed by office, manufacturing, residential. SeaTac Mall is the most prominent development in the area. No public spaces are present and private green spaces, plazas and meeting spaces are few. Steel Lake Park to the northeast and Celebration Park to the southwest are located on the perimeter Federal Way.

In its Comprehensive Plan, high-density and mixed-use development is envisioned for nearly all of Federal Way. Future land uses are planned to include a mix of commercial, office and residential uses, as well as open spaces and other public amenities. Federal Way would transition from low-density auto-oriented development to a higher-density mixed-use pattern that would support transit and pedestrian access (Federal Way, 1995).

## **Kent Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Kent is one of the smaller, more compact Regional Growth Centers. Downtown Kent is divided by a dense grid of local streets scaled for pedestrians. About 11 percent of land use is devoted to commercial and retail uses, although some developable land still exists and many downtown buildings remain underutilized. Community shopping, recreational, medical and civic functions are located in downtown Kent, along with some heavy industry. About 40 percent of the land is divided fairly evenly among single-family housing, office, schools, parking and vacant land.

The King County Regional Justice Center has brought new life to Kent, and is expected to act as a catalyst for further redevelopment. Kent has an active farmers’ market and several festivals throughout the year. In addition to a number of small parks, nearby Earthworks Park offers hiking and picnicking opportunities.

Future land use plans show that all of Kent will be devoted to mixed-use development, including multi-family residential, retail and office land uses (Kent, 1995).

### **Northgate Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

Northgate developed around an auto-oriented suburban style mall, and is consequently built in a pattern of large blocks separated by busy arterial streets. Most blocks, however, have connected sidewalks. Northgate is bisected by I-5, which serves as the western edge of the commercial core.

The most prominent feature in Northgate is the Northgate Mall complex. Existing structures are typically one- to two-story commercial buildings surrounded by large surface parking lots, surrounded by a ring of large apartment complexes. Single-family neighborhoods lie beyond the multi-family development.

Land use is varied in Northgate, with approximately 18 percent of the area devoted exclusively to commercial land uses, 10 percent to office space, and about 16 percent to multi-family and single-family housing.

Over half of planned future land use is devoted to mixed-use commercial development. Multi-family residential surrounding the commercial core is planned to account for 30 percent of land use. Lower-density residential and institutional uses, such as hospitals, are planned to comprise the remainder of land uses in Northgate (Seattle, 1993).

### **Redmond Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Redmond is characterized by its original downtown area, the Redmond Town Center complex to the south, and the developing retail-civic-housing district to the north. The Sammamish River forms the western border, providing access to the regional trail system via the Sammamish River Trail.

Redmond contains a mix of residential land uses (11 percent) and commercial and office uses (40 percent). Existing development is typically one to three stories, with off-street parking. The newer higher-density residential developments include townhouses and apartments that are pushed up to the sidewalk, with parking located beneath the building or in the interior of the block. These housing projects are creating an urban, pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Nine parks enhance Redmond. Pedestrian walkways lined with trees and flower planters contribute to downtown Redmond's livability. Redmond Town Center is a 1.6 million square foot, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use shopping and office complex.

Plans for Redmond support a mix of uses to attract people during the day and evening and to create a more pedestrian-friendly urban place. Over 97 percent of future land use is planned for mixed-use development including office, retail, and urban residential. The remaining area would be devoted to high-density residential development, parks, and pedestrian and bike trails (Redmond, 1995).

### **Renton Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Renton lies west of Interstate 405, south of the Lake Washington shoreline and east of Rainier Avenue South. Renton is divided into two distinct parts: the old downtown commercial district to the south and industrial development to the north. Immediately west of the industrial area is Renton Municipal Airport, which is used heavily by the Boeing Company.

The southern half of Renton contains small blocks and a good pedestrian scale. The industrial area to the north is comprised of just three large blocks.

Forty percent of Renton's land use is industrial. The remaining uses are scattered among commercial, residential, civic, parks, office, parking, and warehousing. Slightly over 7 percent of the land is vacant. Renton's downtown transit-oriented development, Metropolitan Place, includes 4,000 square feet of ground-level retail space and apartments above a two-story garage. It is located across from the newly expanded Renton Transit Center.

Future land use plans are for Renton to devote an even larger amount of land to industrial uses (72 percent). About 22 percent would be dedicated to mixed-use development including office, retail, services and high-density residential. This area would be centered in southern Renton, which is already amenable to pedestrians (Renton, 1995).

### **SeaTac Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

SeaTac is a three-mile narrow strip along SR-99, bordered on the west by Seattle-Tacoma (Sea-Tac) International Airport. A long linear pattern of auto-oriented development forms a significant barrier to east-west travel, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. There is also a profusion of large, tall signs and billboards that visually dominate the setting.

Residential development is the predominant land use in SeaTac, with multi-family residential accounting for 11 percent and single-family housing 17 percent of the area. An additional 8 percent is devoted to several mobile home parks, which will eventually be removed as part of the airport's noise mitigation program. Approximately 15 percent of current land use is commercial, and 10 percent is vacant. Much of the commercial activity is airport-related, including hotels, restaurants, and airport parking. Civic and public uses account for 6 percent of the area. A large portion of downtown SeaTac is devoted to surface parking lots.

Although International Boulevard has been improved with sidewalks and landscaping, many of the streets in SeaTac do not have sidewalks. In addition, the large, suburban-scale blocks are not amenable to pedestrians.

Future land use plans for SeaTac call for significant high-intensity commercial development (36 percent). Much of this development is planned to be oriented toward hotels, restaurants, and other commercial activity associated with the airport. Medium-density residential would account for 22 percent of land use in SeaTac, with low- and high-density residential areas comprising 11 percent. An Aviation Business Center is also planned, which would make up 15 percent. Future land use plans call for 8 percent of land area to be devoted to parks (SeaTac, 1999).

### **Seattle Downtown Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

Seattle Downtown includes the city's historic central business and retail districts, and 35 percent of the city's jobs. Downtown has retained a compact, small-block form even as it has grown to contain over 80 million square feet of non-residential floor space. It includes historic areas such as the Pioneer Square Historic District, the International District, the Pike Place Market, and some 40 historic landmarks.

Seattle Downtown has a relatively uniform grid of streets and alleys. Almost all blocks have sidewalks. Due to a dense street network, nearly 42 percent of the area is in public rights-of-way. About 2 percent of Downtown is used for public parks and open space, and office and commercial uses each comprise 11 percent of land area. Parking and multi-family residential each account for about 7 percent.

In Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, almost 90 percent of Seattle Downtown is planned for mixed-use development, accommodating waterfront activity, commercial, office, residential and industrial land uses. Most of the remainder of the land is planned for industrial uses only (Seattle, 1994).

### **Seattle Uptown Queen Anne Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

Seattle Uptown Queen Anne is known for its steep hills, tight urban grain, and sweeping views of the Seattle skyline, Elliott Bay, and Lake Union. The three neighborhoods within Seattle Uptown Queen Anne are the Uptown Center Regional Growth Center Village, the Uptown Park Neighborhood, and the Seattle Center. Uptown Center contains a mix of residential, commercial, retail, and entertainment uses. Uptown Park is a park-like residential neighborhood. Seattle Center is home to premier sports, art, and entertainment facilities.

Land use is varied throughout Seattle Uptown Queen Anne. The majority of the land is evenly divided among commercial, office, civic, parking and multi-family residential uses. Existing development is typically two to five stories, with parking provided on street, on street, and in structures. Nearly all blocks in Seattle Uptown Queen Anne have sidewalks, the majority with mature and well-tended street trees and landscaping.

According to the Queen Anne Neighborhood Plan, over 80 percent of future land use in this area is planned for commercial/mixed-use development. Much of the remaining land is planned for multi-family residential uses (Seattle, 1999).

### **Seattle University Community Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

The University of Washington dominates the Seattle University Community, occupying nearly a third of the land area. The western portion is characterized by a wide range and mix of commercial (10 percent) and residential (14 percent) land uses. Development in is typically two stories, with both on-street and off-street parking. Most blocks in have sidewalks, street trees, and landscaping.

Land use plans envision over 40 percent of land use devoted to mixed-use development. Much of the remaining area would be used for exclusive multi-family residential development or major institutions, presumably the University of Washington. About 3 percent of land would be set aside for open space (Seattle, 1998).

### **Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

First Hill/Capitol Hill is characterized by a variety of land uses: dense urban multi-family residential areas, storefront commercial streets, mixed-use structures, medical centers, and Seattle University. Existing development in First Hill/Capitol Hill consists of multiple-story structures with shallow (if any) setbacks from property lines. Parking is provided on-street, in surface lots, and in single-purpose and mixed-use parking structures. Most blocks are small, have sidewalks, and many have mature street trees, landscaping, and other amenities that support walking.

Land use varies in Seattle First Hill/Capitol Hill with nearly 25 percent of the area associated with employment-producing land uses (e.g., office, commercial, government) and about 22 percent devoted to exclusive multi-family and single-family residential uses.

According to future plan designations, over half of First Hill/Capitol Hill will continue to be used for multi-family residential development. About 27 percent of future land use is planned for mixed-use development to accommodate commercial, office and high-density residential uses. Major industrial development is intended to grow from less than 1 percent to 14 percent of future land use (Seattle, 1994).

### **Tukwila Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Tukwila is dominated by the Southcenter Shopping Mall and other large retail development. Large block size is predominant and reflects its auto-oriented nature. With its wide, busy streets, large parking lots, large blocks, and long distances between intersections, Tukwila is not very pedestrian-friendly.

Very little housing exists within Tukwila, but a large area of multi-family housing is located across I-405 near City Hall. About 30 percent of Tukwila contains commercial business uses, and warehousing accounts for 25 percent. Nearly 10 percent of the area's land is vacant.

Future land use in Tukwila is planned for a mix of retail, office, commercial, residential and industrial. About 5 percent of the land would be devoted to low-density residential development (Tukwila, 1995).

### **Totem Lake (Kirkland) Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Totem Lake encompasses about one square mile, bounded by I-405 on the east and by established single-family residential areas on the south and west. Development in and around Totem Lake includes residential, office, retail, light industrial and institutional uses, and the city's largest employer, Evergreen Hospital Medical Center. It also contains the Totem Lake Mall, a regional retail center. Residential uses are primarily moderate- to high-density multi-family development, which is an important source of workforce housing. Residential development in the surrounding area tends to be lower density.

According to Kirkland's Comprehensive Plan, commercial and office uses are planned to comprise one-third of future land uses in Totem Lake. The remainder of the area is divided among an area of mixed office and multi-family development, medium- and high-density residential, industrial, and open space uses (Kirkland, 2004).

## ***KITSAP COUNTY***

### **Downtown Bremerton Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

With the exception of the large land parcels associated with the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Downtown Bremerton generally reflects a traditional grid street pattern and block configuration. Bremerton's oldest neighborhoods and structures are located in the downtown area. Downtown Bremerton contains a wide range of housing options for a variety of income levels.

Downtown Bremerton contains a mix of land uses including community shopping, office and retail employment, education and medical facilities, and major industry. In 1990 the waterfront was substantially redeveloped with a public marina, promenade, and tourist attractions. The Naval Shipyard, however, is the dominant land use in Downtown Bremerton, comprising over 45 percent of the land area. About 17 percent of the land area is devoted to single-family residential, and commercial and office space comprises less than 10 percent of current land uses.

According to Bremerton's Comprehensive Plan, only 30 percent of future land is planned for heavy industry/military use. A mix of low- and medium-density residential uses is planned for over 40 percent of future land uses. Commercial uses would continue to account for a relatively small percentage of land uses (Bremerton, 1995).

### **Silverdale Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Silverdale is comprised of several major types of land uses. The downtown core is bordered by single-family residential development to the east and industrial development to the west.

Future land use will include a variety of discrete uses, each lying in a distinct area. The planned main commercial area is intended to provide for regional service and retail needs. Smaller-scale commercial development is also planned, to serve the daily needs of those in the immediate area. A small area is designated for business park development, grouping small- and medium-sized businesses within a park-like setting. Residential development planned for Silverdale includes a variety of densities (Silva, 2005).

## ***PIERCE COUNTY***

### **Downtown Puyallup Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

Downtown Puyallup, the region's smallest Regional Growth Center, is characterized by a tight street grid, small blocks, a mix of older homes, and transitioning commercial land uses. Single-family residential uses occupy approximately 17 percent and multi-family residential approximately 7 percent. Commercial use comprises nearly 14 percent. Only 3 acres in the downtown are vacant, but much of the land is underutilized.

Downtown Puyallup's status as the city's business, cultural and government focal point is being eroded by commercial and office growth on the city's periphery, especially in South Hill. The downtown has seen a significant decline in investment and property maintenance.

According to Puyallup's Comprehensive Plan, over half of Downtown Puyallup is planned for auto- and pedestrian-oriented commercial development. This development is planned to be surrounded by high-density residential development and light industrial uses (Puyallup, 1994).

### **Downtown Tacoma Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

Downtown Tacoma encompasses two historic districts and the emerging urban waterfront along the Thea Foss Waterway. Downtown Tacoma is the site of city, county, and state government, as well as hospitals and schools. Existing development in this Regional Growth Center is typically between two and six stories, with a combination of on-street, off-street, and structured parking. Downtown is characterized by a fine-grained street network, with small blocks that are accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles. Nearly all blocks have sidewalks.

Land use in the Downtown Tacoma Regional Growth Center is primarily devoted to commercial business (30 percent). Twenty-three percent of the land is currently vacant. About 4 percent is devoted to single-family residential and 8 percent to multi-family residential development.

Future land use in Downtown Tacoma is planned for a mix of high-density uses. The plan envisions a mix of street-level retail, high-rise office buildings and hotels, government offices and services, theaters and cultural uses, residential uses in a variety of densities, educational facilities, and limited warehouse uses (Tacoma, 1999).

## **Lakewood Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

The Lakewood Regional Growth Center currently has a suburban shopping center character. The Lakewood Mall site is being redeveloped to provide more of an outdoor shopping experience, with large retail stores distributed among adjoining smaller parking lots. The remaining former mall spaces are being transformed into larger retail spaces that face outward to adjacent streets and walkways instead of into an enclosed shopping mall.

Current land uses are predominantly commercial (22 percent) and residential (19 percent). Just over 7 percent of the Lakewood (about 38 acres) is vacant land. Land use follows a typical auto-oriented pattern, with commercial retail uses along the major arterial streets and auto parking surrounding the mall areas. To the southeast, Lakewood contains a mix of residential areas and commercial development. Only the older residential areas in southeast Lakewood contain block sizes that are more amenable to pedestrians.

Future land use plans show nearly all of Lakewood as mixed-use. The mixed-use designation includes a variety of commercial services and shopping, employment, multi-family housing, and a range of housing densities (Lakewood, 2000).

## **South Hill Regional Growth Center (Core Suburban City)**

South Hill is a rapidly growing subarea within Puyallup. Major development includes the South Hill Mall and auto-oriented retail businesses. Commercial activity accounts for 17 percent of land use in South Hill, industrial comprises 10 percent, and residential uses account for 14 percent of land use. Over 27 percent (approximately 257 acres) is currently vacant.

South Hill has a discontinuous road system with only three arterial streets that traverse the entire center. Many of the streets, however, do have sidewalks. The average block is very large, and roads are widely spaced and offer few interconnections.

The City of Puyallup's Comprehensive Plan calls for a continuation of auto-oriented commercial development in South Hill, devoting 34 percent of future land to this use. Business and industrial uses would be clustered in the eastern section of South Hill, comprising 24 percent of future land use. High- to moderate-density residential development would surround the commercial area, with about 5 percent of land area devoted to open space (Puyallup, 1994).

## **Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

Lying approximately 2 miles southwest of Downtown Tacoma, Tacoma Mall is an important retail district within the city. Land use in Tacoma Mall is predominantly commercial (primarily the shopping center and commercial businesses surrounding it), occupying 27 percent of total land use. Single-family residential accounts for 7 percent of land use, and multi-family accounts for 5.5 percent. Commercial and residential land uses lie within discrete parts of Tacoma Mall.

Existing development is typically one to two stories with off-street surface parking and some structured parking. Most blocks in the Tacoma Mall area have sidewalks, although few have extensive street trees, landscaping, or other amenities that support walking.

According to the city-wide Comprehensive Plan, future land use in Tacoma Mall is devoted to a high-intensity mix of uses. The plan envisions a mix of street-level retail, high-rise office buildings and hotels, government offices and services, theaters and cultural uses, residential uses in a variety of densities, educational facilities, and limited warehouse uses (Tacoma, 1999).

## ***SNOHOMISH COUNTY***

### **Bothell Canyon Park Regional Growth Center(Core Suburban City)**

Bothell Canyon Park has evolved from a bedroom community to a Regional Growth Center, while still maintaining a strong residential character. Bothell Canyon Park contains approximately 1,722 acres, divided into 20 very large blocks. Existing development in Bothell Canyon Park is typically one story with off-street surface parking. Few blocks have fully developed sidewalks, and roadways are generally widely spaced.

Land use in the Bothell Canyon Park is currently devoted to general commercial (10 percent), industrial (10 percent), multi-family residential (26 percent) and single-family residential (19 percent) uses. There is potential for major future development because over 15 percent of the land area (204 acres) is currently vacant. It contains significant steep slopes, natural areas, wetlands, and wildlife habitat areas that require extensive protection. Residential areas are generally located around the boundaries and contain 9,600-square-foot lots or larger. Multi-family development is concentrated at the area's southern boundary.

Future land use plans for Bothell Canyon Park envision a mixed-use area of office, light industry, commercial, and open space. Much of this space is intended for low-density office park developments. These uses are planned to comprise almost 60 percent of the area, with the remainder devoted to residential development and a small portion dedicated to education and civic uses (Bothell, 1995).

### **Downtown Everett Regional Growth Center (Metropolitan City)**

Everett is the largest city in Snohomish County. Approximately 5 percent of the Everett population resides in the downtown area. Primary land uses include government offices (federal, county, and city), the Public Utility District office, a hospital, library, performing arts theater, art galleries, specialty retail stores, and restaurants. Downtown Everett is characterized by a compact, low-rise form with a fine-grained network of narrow streets and small blocks. Nearly all roads have complete and interconnected sidewalks.

Existing land use in Downtown Everett is primarily commercial (20 percent), multi-family residential (19 percent), and single-family housing (13 percent). In addition, large areas in Downtown Everett are devoted to parking.

The City of Everett Comprehensive Plan shows a majority of the area devoted to mixed use, including commercial and higher-density multi-family housing. Low- to medium-density residential and public/civic uses are planned for the remainder of the area (Everett, 1994).

### **Lynnwood Regional Growth Center(Core Suburban City)**

Lynnwood is a major suburban shopping destination with over 5.9 million square feet of commercial space. Lynnwood is located in a typical suburban, auto-oriented environment, focused on the Alderwood Mall in the northeast and commercial retail and office uses that have developed along major arterial

streets in the southwest. Lynnwood's large blocks are composed mostly of surface parking. The street network is made up of broad, widely-spaced arterials, some with landscaped medians. Some aisles within large surface parking lots are used as surrogates for local streets. Large parking lots and aging low-intensity office buildings offer opportunities for infill and redevelopment.

Land use in Lynnwood currently includes a significant amount of multi-family residential use (42 percent), commercial (36 percent), and office (5 percent) uses. Three percent of land area in Lynnwood is vacant and available for future development.

Over half of future land use in Lynnwood is planned for a mix of retail and office. Lynnwood would continue to serve as a retail destination, with residential and park/civic uses each comprising only about 10 percent of land area (Lynnwood, 1995).