

Puget Sound Regional Council
2002 Regional Growth Centers Report

RENTON REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER

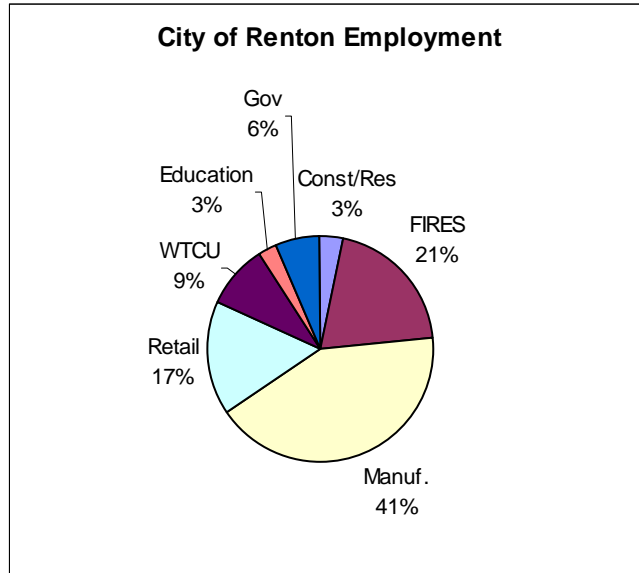
Community Context

The City of Renton, located at the southern end of Lake Washington, covers approximately 17.3 square miles and is home to a year 2000 population of 50,052. It has grown from a small, compact town between the Cedar and Green River Valleys to a mid-sized suburban city, with stable residential neighborhoods, a strong industrial base, and a growing commercial/office sector. Employment in Renton has historically been dominated by industry. The city's location between Seattle, Bellevue and Tacoma, and near Sea-Tac Airport, places Renton in the center of the economic hub of the state.

Renton's adopted regional growth center boundary is based on the historic downtown boundary, included in its 1901 incorporation. The area has long served as an employment center. The largest employer in the center is the Boeing Company, which established its Renton Airport operation in 1940. Today the pressures of economic growth and suburbanization have directed growth away from the city's downtown. Regional shopping centers competing with Renton's downtown retail core have resulted in a shift in downtown retailing from general merchandise to specialty items.

Renton City-Wide Snapshot	
Area (square miles)	17.3
Population (2000)	50,052
Population per square mile	2,893
Employment (2000)	54,825
Employees per square mile	3,169
Housing units (2000):	22,676
Employees per housing unit	2.42

*Source: 2000 U.S. Census, Washington State Employment Security Department,
Puget Sound Regional Council*



The City of Renton relies heavily on the Boeing company and other manufacturing businesses, which provide 41% of all city employment, followed by Financial, Insurance, Real Estate, Services, which comprise 21%, and retail, comprising 17%.

Comprehensive Plan

While downtown Renton was once a compact and bustling retail area, residential and commercial growth in the past several decades has spread out from the downtown to the south (into the Green River valley), and up the east hill toward Lake Youngs. Meanwhile, the downtown continues to be a major employment center, hosting the Boeing company’s Renton plant and other major employers. According to the city’s 1995 plan (amended in 1997), the Renton Regional Growth Center has nearly reached its build-out in terms of employment. Therefore, the plan anticipates future employment growth within the city will occur south of the downtown, in the Green River valley.

The city’s comprehensive plan forecasts city population to grow from 41,395 in 1990 to 57,409 in the year 2010. The city’s year 2000 population was 50,052. The city’s planning area population (which includes the city plus its future annexation area) is expected to grow from 101,593 in 1990 to 135,161 in the year 2010.

Over the past 20 years, while suburban growth was spreading out from the city center, the downtown experienced less investment in public infrastructure and private development. One of the 1995 plan’s goals is to bring retail, office and residential uses back into the downtown in greater amounts and intensities than before. The plan’s goal is to focus growth into the downtown regional growth center. The plan’s vision for the downtown regional growth center area is to achieve a mix of uses to include residential, retail, office, and services uses which support transit and “...create a new synergism of public and private sector activities. In the surrounding residential areas, infill urban scale townhouse and multi-family developments are anticipated. Site planning and infrastructure will promote a pedestrian scale environment and amenities.” In the regional growth center, the city’s comprehensive plan supports urban housing at the highest densities allowed in the city (up to 100 units per acre). The recently completed Metropolitan Place development represents the type of development foreseen in the plan.

The Regional Growth Center

Background

The Renton Regional Growth Center lies west of I-405, south of the Lake Washington shoreline, and east of Rainier Avenue. Renton's barbell-shaped center has two distinct parts: the south area comprises the old downtown commercial district while the north area is primarily devoted to industrial use (including the Boeing company's Renton plant). Immediately west of the industrial part of the center, and across the Cedar River, is Renton Municipal Airport, which is used heavily by the Boeing company.

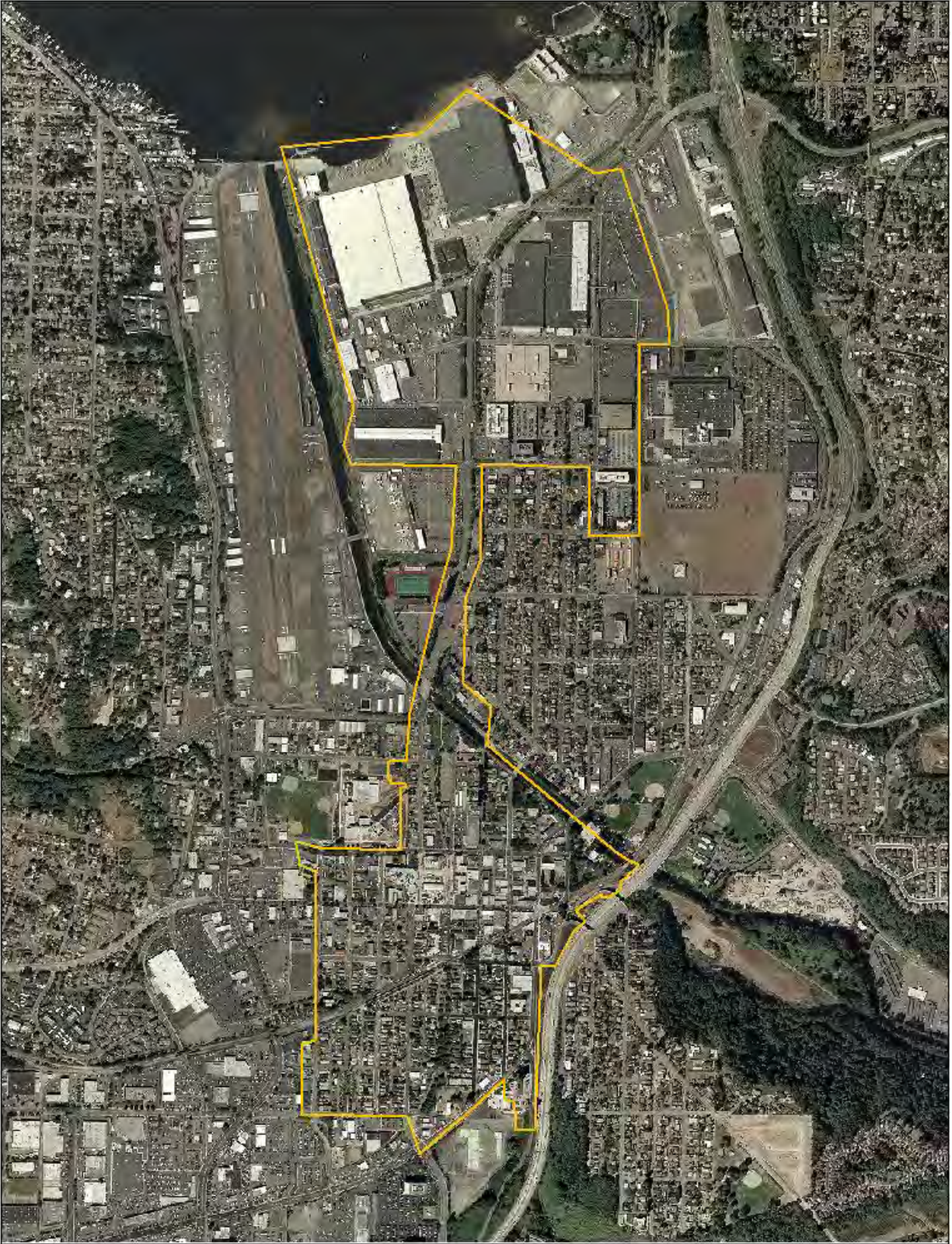
With support from both the public and private sectors, the Renton Regional Growth Center has begun to experience reinvestment over the past 5 years. Portions of old downtown Renton are being redeveloped. Former auto dealer sites are being acquired for redevelopment, and new multi-family housing, such as the Metropolitan Place project, have become new anchors of the downtown. In addition, Metro's newly expanded Renton Transit Center is located in the heart of Renton's regional growth center, adjoining Metropolitan Place.

See the following page for an aerial photo of the Renton regional growth center.

Regional Growth Center Planning and Implementation

Renton is engaged in a series of planning efforts that are focused on moving the city toward its regional growth center goals. As part of the city's regional growth center designation, Renton has agreed to accept 7,417 new households within the regional growth center in order to help achieve the mix of housing, jobs, and shops needed to support the Downtown Renton Regional Growth Center. The South Renton Neighborhood Plan, completed in June 2002, is the city's latest effort to shape the future of the regional growth center. This area comprises the south half of the older downtown portion of the regional growth center, south of Houser Way S. The south Renton neighborhood plan will guide the redevelopment of this area in a transition from its existing mix of apartments, non-conforming single family homes, and businesses, into a higher density urban multi-family residential neighborhood which will support employment and retail opportunities on neighboring properties in the regional growth center. The plan includes residential densities which range from 15 to 100 units per acre. In addition to planning and zoning guidance, the plan contains policies related to transportation, capital facilities and utilities, parks, streetscapes, and urban design/neighborhood character. The plan provides development incentives for private development, encourages owner-occupied housing, and allows mixed use condominiums above ground level retail space.

The city has established a multi-family design district for the south Renton neighborhood, and for the remaining downtown part of the regional growth center has created an Urban Center Design Overlay District that provides design and development guidelines aimed at moving the city toward its regional growth center goals.



The city is currently preparing an update to the downtown core element of its Comprehensive Plan. When complete, this updated Subarea plan will include stronger regional growth center policy as well as ties to countywide planning policies and the Regional Council's VISION 2020 regional growth center policies. In addition, the city's Comprehensive Plan update (planned for 2003) will clarify the relationships between the south part of the regional growth center (primarily the commercial downtown core and adjoining residential area) and the north portion of the regional growth center (primarily the Boeing plant and other industrial uses). As part of its regional growth center planning effort the city is evaluating its parking standards to address current disincentives to private developers, and attempting to provide positive incentives for new development. Future planned updates to the city's downtown plan and regional growth center plan will address the emerging opportunities for redevelopment of long-held properties now being surplus by the Boeing Company in the north part of the regional growth center. These planning efforts will respond to future Boeing decisions and actual market conditions in these areas.

Population, Housing, and Employment

From 1990 to 2000, population grew from 1,387 to 1,788 (29%), housing units grew from 900 to 1,056 (17%), and households increased 34%, from 732 to 979. Population and housing densities also grew, with population density increasing by 28% and housing unit density growing by 17%. In 2000 the center has reached 20% of its population target and 24% of its housing unit target. The recent development of new higher density housing in the Renton Regional Growth Center (not included in the year 2000 figures) will push these numbers higher.

In 2000 Renton Regional Growth Center had reached 17,184 employees, 90% of its employment target. The mix of jobs in the Renton center is heavily influenced by the presence of the Boeing Company and other manufacturing and industrial activities. In the year 2000 the center's employment was divided among the major sectors as follows: 79% manufacturing; 9% services; 5% wholesale, transportation, communications, and utilities; 4% retail; and 1% each for construction, government/education, and FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate). With 17,184 jobs contained in 551 acres, the center has an employment density of nearly 20,000 jobs per square mile, or 31 jobs per acre. This compares favorably with the 25 jobs per acre density guideline contained in Regional Council's VISION 2020.

Renton Regional Growth Center Population, Housing, and Employment (2000)			
	1990	2000	Target
Population	1,387	1,788	8,978
Persons per square mile	1,617	2,077	-
Housing units	900	1,056	4,500
Housing units per gross acre	1.6	1.9	-
Households	732	979	-
Households per gross acre	1.3	1.8	-
Employment *	14,007	17,184	19,200
Employees per gross acre *	25	31	-
Employees per housing unit *	15.6	16.3	-
* Employment figures are for 1995 and 2000			

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, Washington State Employment Security Department, Puget Sound Regional Council

Renton Regional Growth Center Employment by Sector	
Services	9%
Retail	4%
FIRE	1%
WTCU	5%
Manufacturing	79%
Government/education	1%
Construction/resources	1%

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

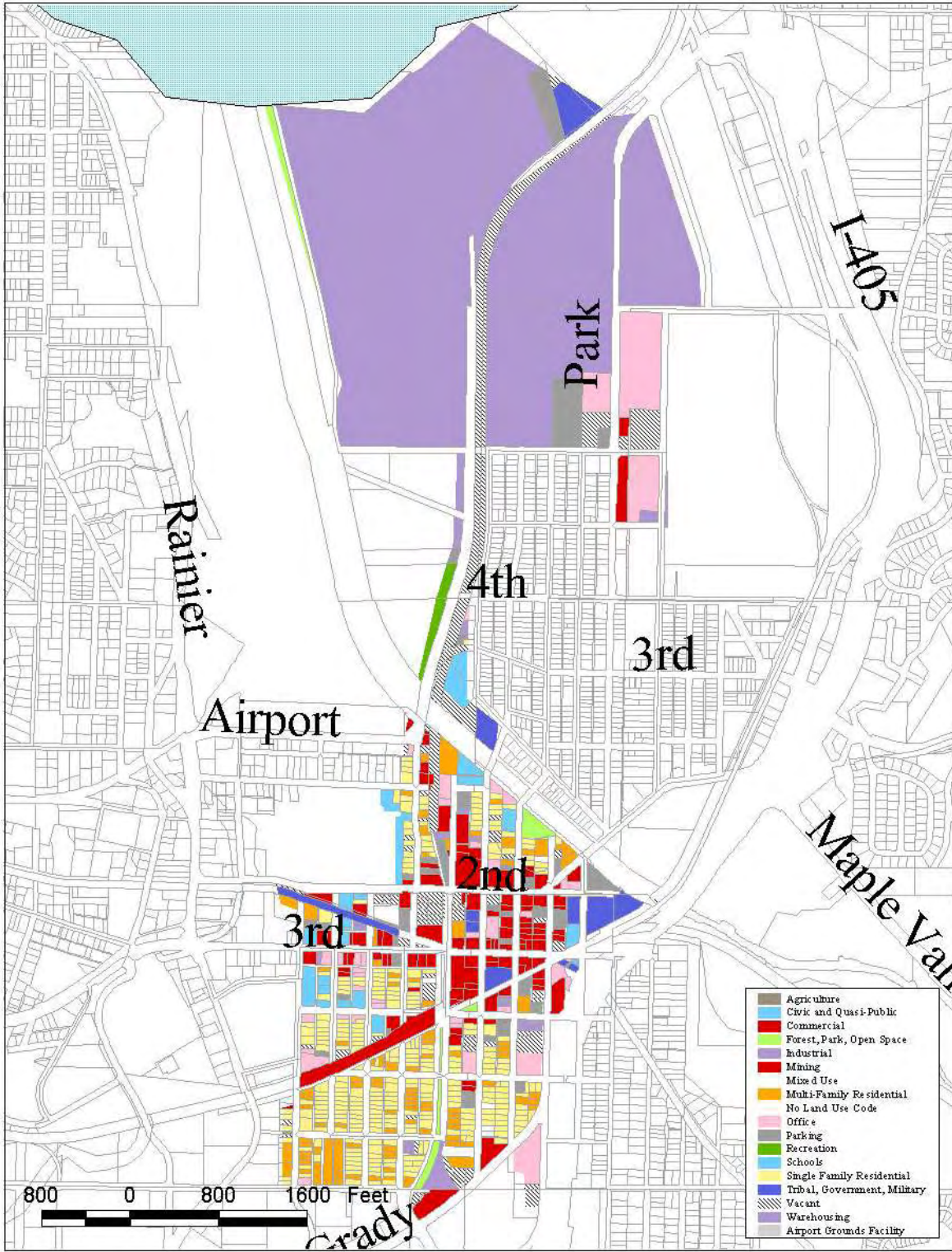
Land Use, Character & Urban Form

One of the older cities in the region, Renton still has some remaining vacant and underused land in the historic downtown, which offers a limited capacity for new development. The center includes a portion of the Cedar River and Lake Washington shorelines, and has a mix of uses. Community shopping, residential, and industrial uses share the area with office space, civic, and governmental functions. Cultural, arts and entertainment venues, such as the Renton Civic Theater, are present in the center as well. A major center attraction is the Cedar River Trail. The Spirit of Washington Dinner Train departs from downtown Renton’s depot. The Renton Fire Station is on the Washington State Register of Historic Buildings, and is home to the Renton Historical Museum and Society.

The land use element of Renton’s comprehensive plan shows the old downtown area (southern part of the regional growth center) as commercial, and the north end (Boeing) as industrial. The city hopes to continue to develop and improve a mix of uses in downtown to include residential options, commercial and retail opportunities, both light/high technology and heavy industrial uses, public services, entertainment, and recreation and youth activities. To accommodate a tripling of population, multi-family housing is planned to be available in a wide variety of types and prices. A new, larger City Hall campus, anchoring the east end of the center, is in development. The campus is anticipated to contain a public safety complex, administration building, public parking garage, and open space. Plans to expand the Cedar River Trail and integrate it with the city’s trail system will make the center more accessible to walkers and bikers.

See the map on the following page for a depiction of current land use in the Renton regional growth center.

Renton Urban Center (Current Land Use)



Renton Regional Growth Center Existing Land Use	
	Percentage
Civic/Quasi-public	1.33%
Commercial	5.43%
Parks/Open Space	2.33%
Industrial	40.63%
Mixed Use	0.14%
Residential – Multi family	2.79%
Office	3.76%
Parking	2.99%
Recreation	1.89%
Schools	0.26%
Residential – Single Family	5.86%
Government/Military	2.87%
Unknown (No Data)	22.43%
Vacant	7.02%
Warehousing	0.28%
Total	100%
Employment Related Land Use	54.56%
Residential Related Land Use	8.79%

Source: King County Assessor records, Puget Sound Regional Council

Forty percent of Renton Regional Growth Center land use is industrial related, represented mostly by Boeing’s Renton Plant. Remaining land uses are scattered among commercial, residential, civic/quasi-public, parks, office, parking, and warehousing. According to King County Assessor records, slightly over 7% of the center’s land is vacant, which could provide for future growth in the center.

The City of Renton’s land use plan shows a majority of the regional growth center devoted to industrial use, with small areas planned for office and residential. The plan dedicates nearly 23% of the center as “center downtown,” which provides a mix of uses, including retail, office, services, and high density housing.

Renton Regional Growth Center Future Land Use	
	Percentage
Center Downtown *	22.72%
Employment Area – Industrial	72.17%
Employment Area – Office	4.44%
Residential Options	0.51%
Unknown (No Data)	0.16%
Total	100%
* This designation provides mixed use retail, office, services, and multi-family residential areas.	

Source: City of Renton Comprehensive Plan (2000), Puget Sound Regional Council

See the map on the following page for a depiction of designated planned land uses in the Renton regional growth center.

Renton’s regional growth center, covering 551 acres, is divided into 64 blocks with an overall block size of 8.6 acres (gross) and 6.7 acres (net). Three large blocks (totaling 325 acres) comprise the industrial area in the north part of the center. The southern part of the center, south of the Cedar River, contains 54 blocks totaling 184 acres. This southern half of the center provides a good pedestrian scale, with blocks averaging 3.4 acres. The center contains 687 parcels with an average size of .62 acres, covering some 426 acres (this excludes streets and other rights of way). The land contained in parcels comprises 77% of the entire regional growth center area. Within the Renton Regional Growth Center there are over 13 miles of roads, with an average of one intersection per 6 acres.

Renton Regional Growth Center Character and Urban Form	
Total area (acres)	551
Number of blocks	64
Average block size (gross acres)	8.6
Number of parcels	687
Average parcel size (net acres)	0.62
Road network (linear miles)	13.2
Intersection density (intersections/acre)	0.16

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council

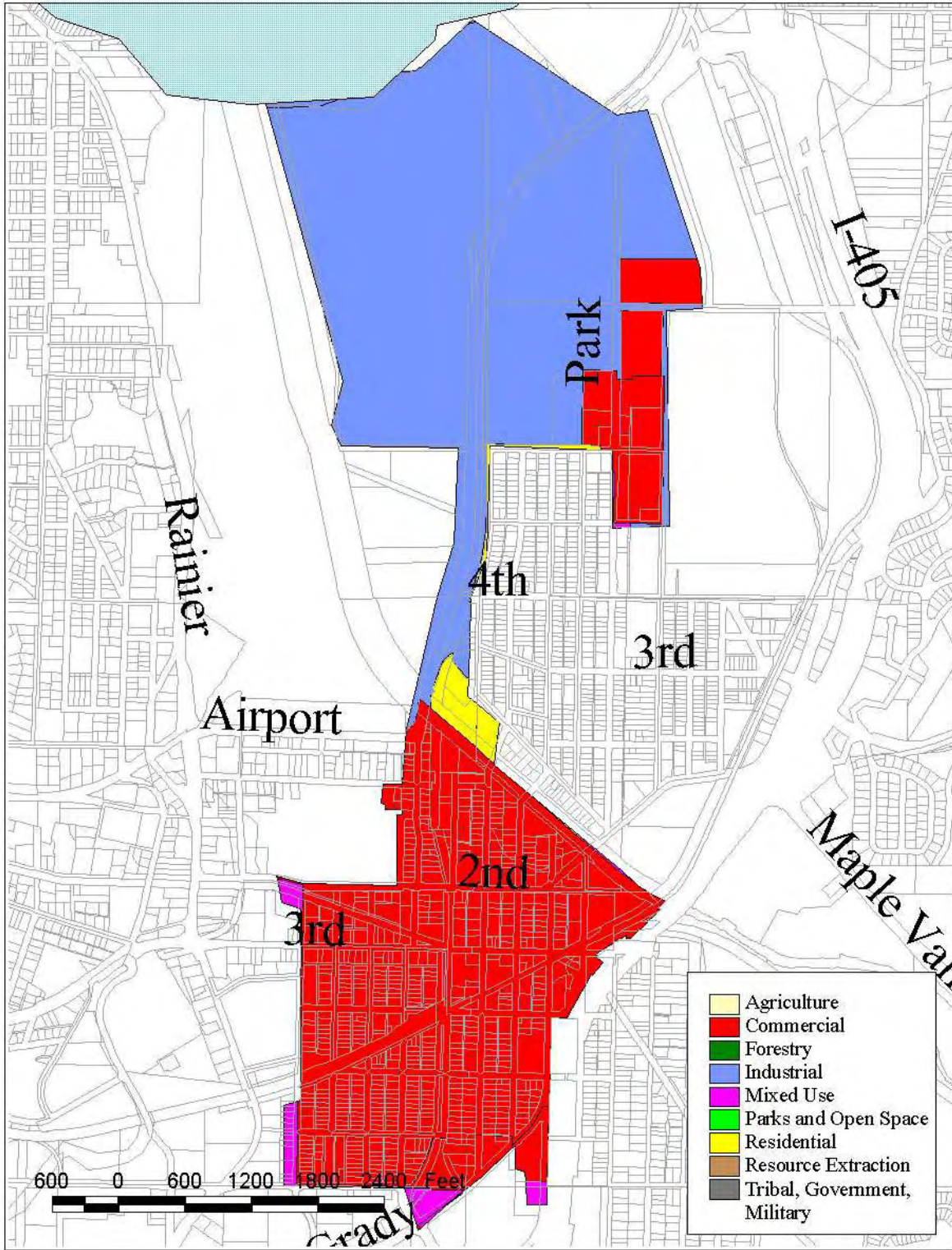
Transportation and Access

Two major freeways, interstate 405 and state route 167, provide the Renton Regional Growth Center with connections to the regional highway system. I-405 interchanges serving the center are located at Rainier Avenue South (the north end of the freeway portion of SR-167), Bronson Way, Sunset Boulevard, and Park Avenue North. Major arterial streets include Grady Way, Park Avenue N., Rainier Avenue, Logan Avenue S., and the S. 2nd Street and S. 3rd Street one-way couplet. The street system provides a good street grid, with average block sizes of 2.9 net acres.

The center is served by several Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad branch tracks, which provide freight rail access to Boeing and other industrial users in the center.

The Renton Transit Center is currently located at Burnett Ave. S., between S. 2nd and 3rd streets in downtown Renton. A new mixed-use project is currently being constructed adjacent to the transit station. This project consists of three stories of apartments above two levels of shared-use parking and 3,500 square feet of ground-level retail space. Transit users and the residents of the 90 units of mixed-income housing will share these parking spaces.

Renton Urban Center (Future Land Use)



Renton's downtown transit-oriented development, Metropolitan Place, includes 4,000 square feet of ground-level retail space and 90 apartments above a two-story garage with 240 parking stalls. It is located across from the newly expanded Renton Transit Center. The parking and apartment development is privately owned and operated by Dally Homes, and King County leases 150 of the stalls for park-and-ride use. The agreement between Dally Homes and King County permitted many goals to be met in the development of the Metropolitan Place TOD. Dally created a mixed-use affordable housing project in downtown Renton and King County created new park-and-ride capacity.

Thirty of the 150 park-and-ride stalls are designated for shared use with residents during non-commuter hours; the rest are dedicated for park-and-ride use. Ninety stalls are provided for resident use. As part of the 30-year agreement to lease park-and-ride stalls to King County Metro, the developer supplies one free Metro bus pass for every apartment unit. The agreement also stipulates that the units be affordable to a mix of incomes. In addition to its location near the transit center, Metropolitan Place is close to a new urban park, retail stores, theater, schools and restaurants, all in downtown Renton. The building occupies the site of the old Good Chevrolet building.

King County Metro has renovated and expanded the Renton Transit Center, located across the street from Metropolitan Place, to include additional parking, a plaza, new bus layover and loading areas, and street intersection improvements. The work also includes new paving, shelters, landscaping and other passenger and pedestrian improvements in the area. The Renton Transit Center is a joint project between King County Metro and the City of Renton, and had an approximate cost of \$4.4 million. Several private investments are near the Renton transit-oriented development. Across the street from the transit center is Renaissance at Renton, a recently opened 110-unit luxury apartment complex. One block south is Burnett Station, a 55-unit apartment complex that opened in Summer 2001. These projects were also developed by Dally Homes. As a part of a plan initiated by the City of Renton, many street and sidewalk improvements, including a new urban city park at Third Street and Burnett, have been included in the downtown redevelopment.

The Renton Regional Growth Center is served by a total of 16 separate routes, with an average am peak period headway of one bus every 33 minutes.

Renton Regional Growth Center Transit Routes and Frequencies (AM Peak Period)			
Item	Route #	Destination	Freq
1	101	Seattle	11.88
		Renton	20.88
2	105	Kennydale	30.00
3	106	Seattle	20.83
		Renton	30.00
4	107	Rainier Beach-Renton	30.62
5	110	Renton Circulator	28.73
6	143	Seattle	30.00
7	148	Fairwood	30.00
8	149	Black Daimond	94.67
9	153	Kent	30.00
10	167	UW	26.00
11	169	Kent-Renton	30.00
12	240	Bellevue-Renton	35.00
13	340	Shoreline or Bellevue	22.00
		Renton	20.00
14	565	Bellevue-Renton	36.00
		Federal Way	60.00
15	908	Highlands	60.00
16	952	Boeing Everett	30.00
			33.83

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, Metro Transit, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit

Regional growth center references and contacts

City of Renton Comprehensive Plan (1995, as amended)

South Renton Neighborhood Plan (2002)

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