

Puget Sound Regional Council 2002 Regional Growth Centers Report

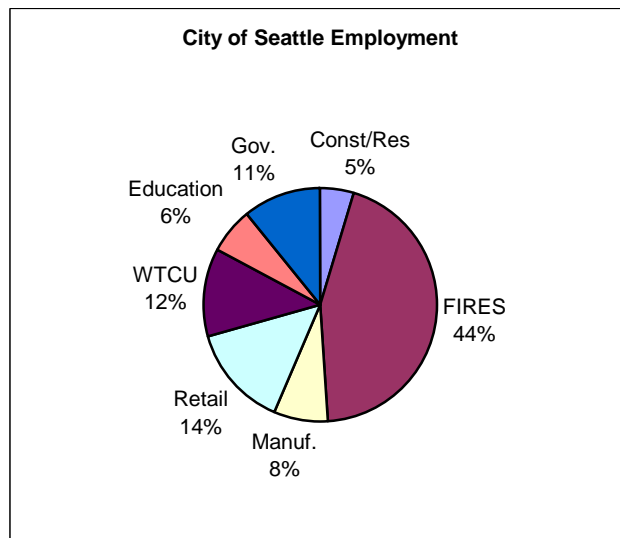
SEATTLE NORTHGATE REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER

Community Context

Founded in 1869, the City of Seattle is located on Puget Sound in the State of Washington, 113 miles south of the U.S.-Canadian border. Seattle is the leading commercial, cultural and advanced technology center of the U.S. Pacific Northwest, and a major port city for trans-Pacific and European trade. Surrounded by mountains and water, the greater Seattle area features abundant recreational opportunities year-round. With a 2000 population of more than 563,000, and spread over 84 square miles, the city is the region's largest and most diverse in terms of population, economic activity, and transportation options.

Seattle City-Wide Snapshot	
Area (square miles)	83.8
Population (2000)	563,374
Population per square mile	6,723
Employment (2000)	503,104
Employees per square mile	6,004
Housing units (2000):	270,524
Employees per housing unit	1.9

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



The majority of employment in the city of Seattle is devoted to Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Services. This sector provides 44% of all the city's employment. Retail provides 14% of the city's employment. Other major job sectors include Wholesale trade, Transportation, Communication, and Utilities (12%), and Government (11%).

Comprehensive Plan

Seattle's *Toward a Sustainable Seattle* comprehensive plan, originally adopted in 1994, was developed to accommodate 72,000 new residents, a range of 131,400 to 146,600 new jobs, and between 50,000 and 60,000 new households by the year 2014. The plan uses an "Urban Village" strategy to preserve the best qualities of the city's distinct neighborhoods. The strategy combines small changes in the city's development pattern with a more complete and competitive intermodal public transportation system. The preferred overall pattern and character of development in the city will be achieved through directing growth to Urban Villages, where conditions and infrastructure can best support increased densities. Dispersed growth along arterials and in other areas not considered conducive to pedestrian and cohesive community development and is discouraged. The overall intent of the strategy is to focus future development in Urban Village locations in order to protect existing single family areas.

As part of this strategy, the City has designated five major Regional Growth Centers, along with a number of smaller Urban Villages, to absorb much of projected growth. The plan specifically recognizes the relationship of its designated Regional Growth Centers and Manufacturing Industrial Centers to regional guidance contained in King County's Countywide Planning Policies, and contains a stated policy to meet the density criteria they contain. All of the Regional Growth Centers and Urban Villages are planned to be vibrant, active areas, with a mix of housing, retail, cultural, educational, and employment opportunities. The plan assigns 45 percent of future household growth (22,500 – 26,700 households) and 65 percent of job growth (85,410 – 95,500 jobs) to the five larger Regional Growth Centers. In addition, the plan designates two Manufacturing/Industrial Centers, Ballard Interbay Northend, and Duwamish. Although the city has no housing goals for these MI Centers, they are expected to absorb approximately 10 percent of new jobs (13,140 – 14,660 jobs).

The Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center

Background

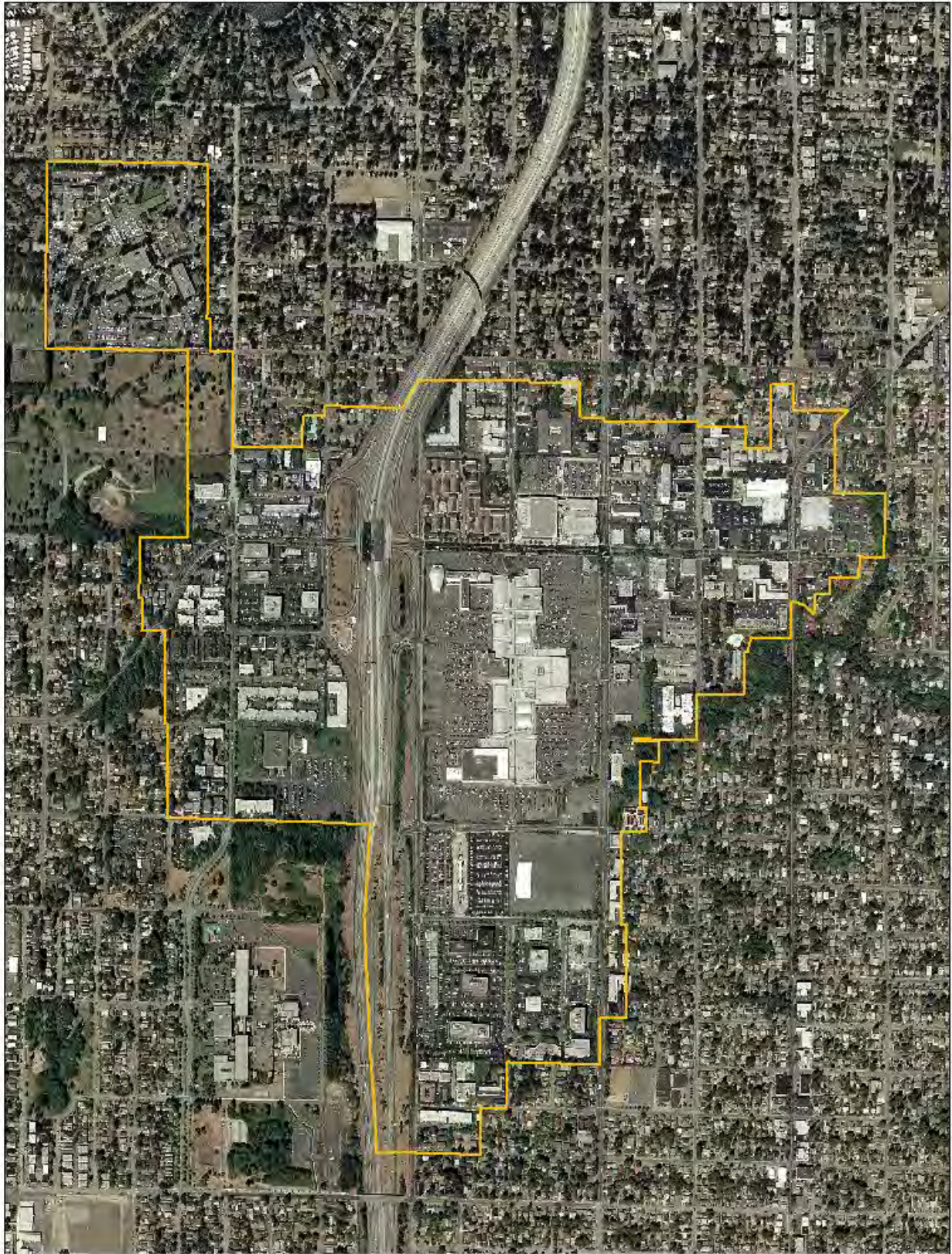
Northgate Mall was built in 1950 in a part of the city that, at the time, was a suburban area with a mix of single family homes and vacant land. Since the completion of Interstate 5 in 1965 the Northgate area has become progressively commercial. At 410 acres, the Northgate Regional Growth Center is one of the smaller of Seattle's Regional Growth Centers. The center currently represents about one percent of the city's population and two percent of its jobs. It is, however, one of the city's larger retail and office centers and has one of the city's few hospital complexes outside of central Seattle. Seattle's comprehensive plan calls for the center to nearly double its population and employment over the next 20 years. In addition, the plan calls for much more dense development, with housing, public spaces, and commercial uses being developed on portions of what is now surface parking. The Center's major attractions include the Northgate Mall and Northwest Hospital. North Seattle Community College is just outside the center's southwestern boundary. Postwar suburban neighborhoods surround the commercial core area on three sides. The 1993 Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan envisions transforming the center's underutilized, auto-oriented office/retail area into a higher intensity mix of office, retail, and housing surrounded by single-family neighborhoods. Preservation of existing neighborhoods is a key part of the plan. Particular emphasis has been placed on creating new public plazas and parks, and on restoring degraded environmental features.

See the aerial photo on the following page for a depiction of the Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center.

Center Planning and Implementation

The City of Seattle has long planned for the creation of a more pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use activity center at Northgate. Its 1993 Northgate Community Plan called for reducing surface parking, adding a new street north of the Mall, closing one of the park-and-ride lots, concentrating park-and-ride spaces in a new garage adjacent to the transit center, and creation of a community park. The improvements would allow for a major redevelopment of Northgate Mall to include additional retail and entertainment, offices, a hotel, and multi-family housing on the site currently occupied by the mall's parking lot. Despite the development of the 1993 plan, no community plan has been adopted and incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Several development proposals have been submitted, and withdrawn, over the years. Most recently, in May 2002, Seattle's Mayor Greg Nickels announced a new package of decisions for the Northgate area, including new streetscape improvements, the siting of a new public library, park and community center, and drainage improvements that would allow future daylighting of Thorton Creek. The City is actively working with a potential private developer and community groups to put the development plan into effect.



Population, Housing, and Employment

The Northgate Regional Growth Center had a year 2000 population of 5,740, an increase of 20% from the 1990 figure of 4,799. Housing units increased by 13% in the 10-year period, from 3,077 in 1990 to 3,467 in 2000, and households also increased, from 2,927 in 1990 to 3,325 in 2000. The city's population target for the center is 10,059 and its household target is 6,291. As of 2000 the center had reached 57.1% of its population target and 52.8% of its household target.

With the increase in population and housing from 1990 to 2000, the Northgate Regional Growth Center also saw an increase in densities, with population increasing from 6,466 to 7,883 persons per square mile, housing units increasing from 6.5 to 7.4 units per gross acre, and households increasing from 6.2 to 7.1 per gross acre.

The center contained some 10,655 employees in 2000, compared with an employment target of 20,666. This places the center at 51.6% of its target as of 2000. The employee target is consistent with the Regional Council's *VISION 2020* employment guideline, which established 15,000 jobs as the minimum level of employment for an Regional Growth Center. With its 10,655 employees, Northgate had an employment density of 23 employees per gross acre in 2000. This compares with the *VISION 2020* density guideline of 25 employees per acre. If the center retains its current size and achieves its target jobs, it would reach an employment density of over 44 employees per acre, thus exceeding the *VISION 2020* guideline.

Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Population, Housing, and Employment			
	1990*	2000	Target
Population	4,799	5,740	10,059
Persons per square mile	6,466	7,883	—
Housing units	3,077	3,467	—
Housing units per gross acre	6.5	7.4	—
Households	2,927	3,325	6,291
Households per gross acre	6.2	7.1	13.5
Employment	9,460	10,655	20,666
Employees per gross acre	—	23	—
Employees per housing unit	3.10	3.10	—
* Employment data is for 1995			

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

Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Employment by Sector (2000)	
<i>Sector</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Const/Res	1.23%
FIRE	13.19%
Manufacturing	1.98%
Retail	29.29%
Services	49.82%
WTCU	2.43%
Education	---
Government	2.05%
Total	10,655

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

Land Use, Character & Urban Form

The Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center developed around an auto-oriented suburban style mall, and is consequently built in a pattern of large blocks separated by busy arterial streets. It is a moderate 466 acres, less than half the size of the Downtown center, and has a 2000 population estimate of 5,740 residents. The center is characterized by 28 large super blocks averaging 11.9 net acres each (16.6 gross acres) in size, as opposed to about two acres for a traditional, pre-auto era downtown. In 1995 the City reported that there were 39 blocks averaging 7.7 net acres, suggesting that there has been some consolidation with recent redevelopment activity. Land use is varied in the center, with over 35 percent of the area associated with employment producing land uses, and about 16 percent devoted to multifamily and single family housing. If the comprehensive plan's growth targets are met, the center will have 20,666 jobs, and 6,291 households. The center is bisected by Interstate 5, which serves as the western edge of the center's commercial core.

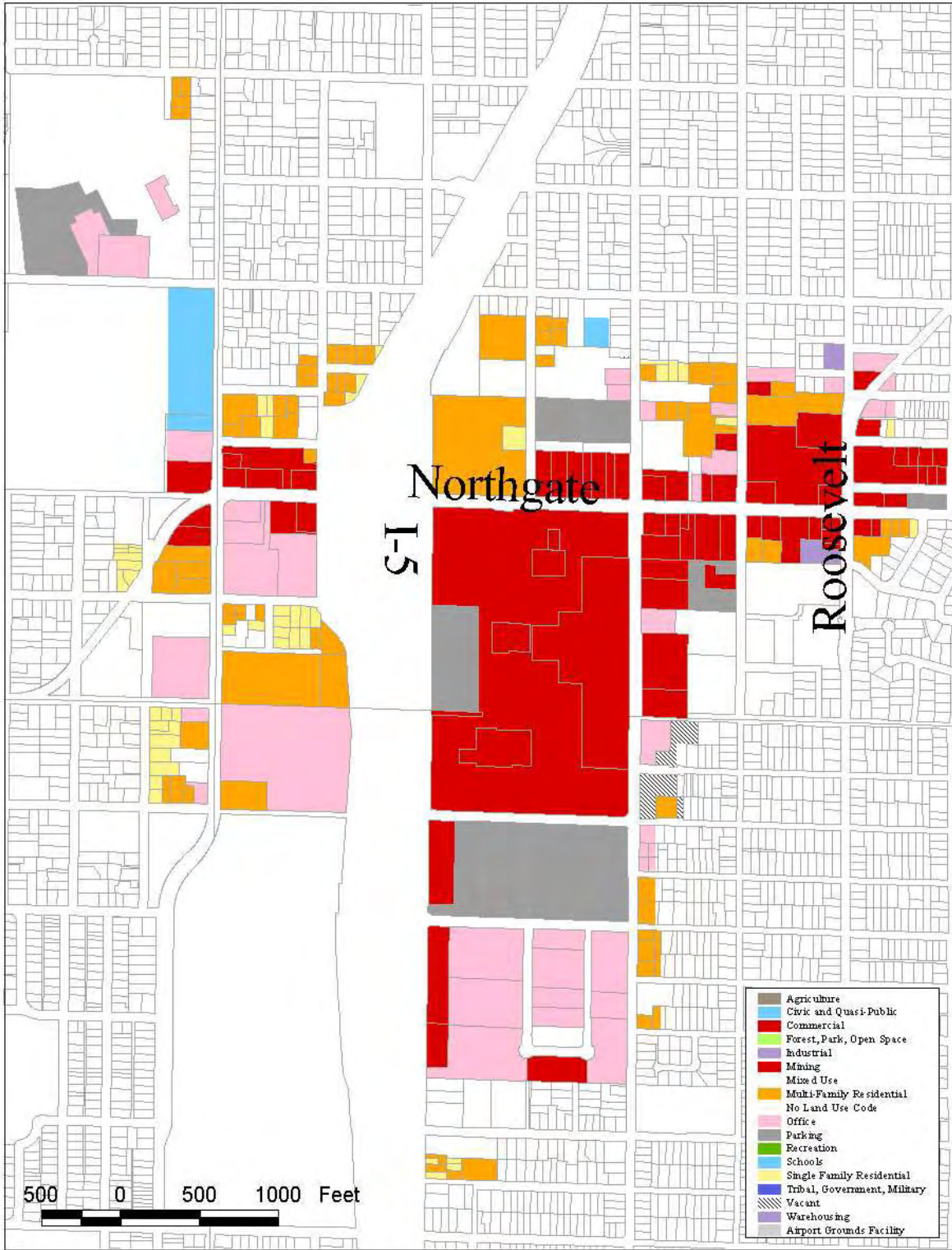
Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Character and Urban Form	
Total area (acres)	466
Number of blocks	28
Average block size (gross acres)	11.9
Number of parcels	483
Average parcel size (net acres)	0.69
Road network (linear miles)	16.38
Intersection density (intersections/acre)	0.16

Source: US Census, Puget Sound Regional Council

The most prominent feature of the center is the Northgate Mall complex. Developed parcels at the core typically contain one- to two-story commercial buildings surrounded by large surface parking lots, while an outer ring of large apartment complexes defines the center's boundaries. Single family neighborhoods lie beyond the multifamily areas. The center has an approximately 16.38 linear mile road network, with an average of one intersection for every 6.38 acres. Most blocks in the center have connected sidewalks, and many have street trees, landscaping, and other amenities that support walking. The center also has two park and ride lots and a transit center.

See the map on the following page for a depiction of current land uses in the Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center

Northgate Urban Center (Current Land Use)



Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Existing Land Use	
	Percentage
Civic/Quasi-public	1.20%
Commercial	18.16%
Hospital	5.57%
Mixed Use	0.02%
Residential – Multi Family	7.51%
Office	9.86%
Parking	6.03%
Schools	0.26%
Residential – Single Family	7.76%
Unknown (No Land Use Data)	41.80%
Vacant	1.60%
Warehousing	0.23%
Total	100%
Employment Related Land Use	35.30%
Residential Related Land Use	15.27%

Source: King County Assessor

Exclusive commercial land uses account for 18% of the city’s Northgate Regional Growth Center. Nearly 10% of the center is used for office space, while single and multi family housing each comprise 8%. Just under 6% of the center’s land is devoted to hospitals. Unfortunately, King County assessor records do not provide complete data on existing land use. Nearly 42 percent the Northgate center is shown as “unknown.” These areas are likely devoted to mixed-use buildings, including commercial and office uses.

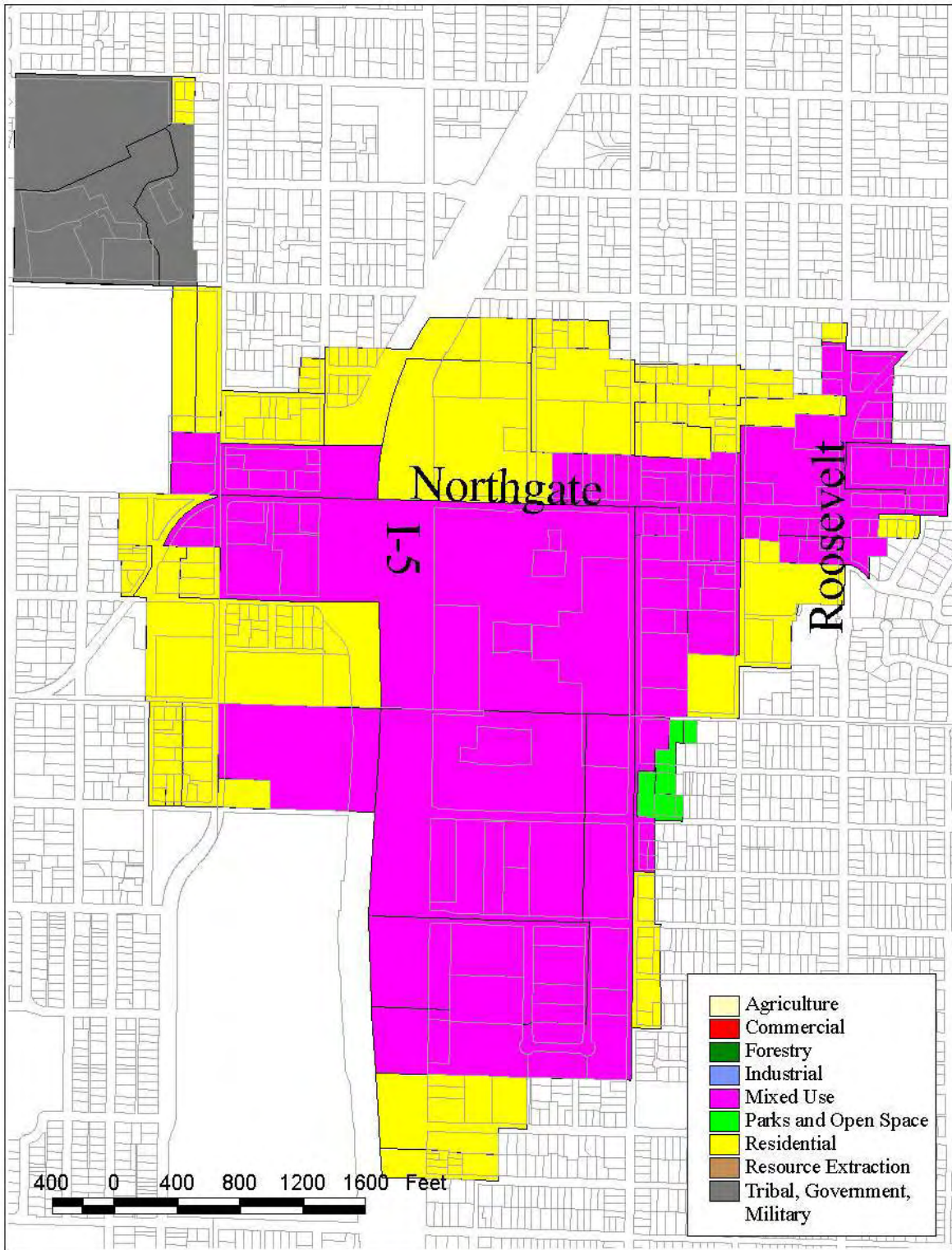
Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Future Land Use	
	Percentage
Commercial/Mixed Use in Centers/Villages	56.79%
Major Institutional	8.34%
Multi-Family Residential Areas	29.21%
Public Open Space	1.29%
Single Family Residential Areas	4.38%
Total	100%

Source: Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan – Toward a Sustainable Seattle (2000)

Planned future land use was derived from the land use element of the City of Seattle’s comprehensive plan. Future land use in Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center will be largely devoted to mixed use commercial and multi-family residential. These two land use categories will account for 86% of the future center land use. Lower density residential development will account for about 4%, while institutional uses (hospitals, etc.) are planned to comprise 8% of the center.

See the map on the following page for a depiction of future land uses in the Seattle Downtown Regional Growth Center.

Northgate Urban Center (Future Land Use)



Transportation and Access

The Center is linked to the region by a major freeway interchange and to the rest of the city by six principal arterial roads. While access is predominantly by car, transit has a major presence at the Northgate Transit Center, which, combined with two other nearby park-and-ride lots, is served by 60 express, local and other transit routes. Freight movement is facilitated by the proximity of the freeway and State Routes 99 and 522. Northgate Hospital and the other areas to the west of I-5 are poorly linked to the eastern part of the center except by car on Northgate Way. The 1993 Northgate Plan calls for almost doubling Metro bus service, primarily in the off-peak hours (when most center trips are made) and in an east-west direction to connect with adjacent neighborhoods, rather than only providing transfers from more distant areas. The local plan envisions the development of six “green streets” to connect cars, pedestrians and bicycles from residential areas to the core.

Eighteen separate transit routes, including King County Metro, Community Transit, and Sound Transit services, pass through the center. These routes provide on average one bus run approximately every 26 minutes in the AM peak period. Many of these routes connect at the Northgate Transit Center.

Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Transit Routes and Frequencies (AM Peak Period)			
Item	Route #	Destination	Freq
1	5	Seattle CBD	29.38
2	16	Seattle CBD	22.06
3	16x	Seattle CBD	17.57
4/5	41/307	Seattle CBD	9.73
	307	Woodinville	22.50
6/7	505/506	Everett	30.00
8/9	66/67	Roosevelt Corridor	13.83
	66	Seattle CBD	30.10
	67	UW	22.50
10	68	UW	30.00
11	75	UW-Ballard	27.69
12	242	Overlake	24.29
13	302	Aurora Village	33.33
14	318	Four Freedoms	30.00
15	315	Richmond Beach	30.00
16	317	Edmonds	37.20
17	377	Lynnwood	34.22
18	950	Boeing Everett	30.00
			26.36

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, Community Transit, Everett Transit, Kitsap Transit, Metro Transit, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit

Transit station areas

The existing Northgate Transit Center, located south of the Northgate Mall, currently provides local and express bus service to a wide variety of locations in the region. King County Metro plans to construct a new parking garage adjacent to the transit center. The parking structure would replace four existing Metro park-and-ride lots: one in the I-5 freeway right of way, one west and another east of the Transit Center, and a fourth at Fifth Avenue NE and NE 112th Street. Existing capacity of the four lots is about 1,421 stalls. The new parking structure would have 1,400 replacement stalls. In addition to a parking structure King County is working with the city and a developer on a transit-oriented development project at Northgate.

The Northgate TOD would improve the environment for pedestrians and transit customers as well as provide private revenues to reduce the net cost of the project to the public. Based on June 2002 market analysis, the private portion of the project could include 326 apartments with 7,300 square feet of first-floor retail, cinema with 3,200 seats, 132,000 square feet of office space, 34,000 square feet of shops, 21,000 square feet of restaurants, a 10,000-square-foot childcare center, and about 1,100 private parking stalls. The public portion of the project could include aerial right of way for light rail and a station, a new bus transit center with ten passenger bays and 14 layover bays, and a parking structure with 1,400 parking stalls, of which 600 would be for transit use only and 800 would be shared with private uses.

The Touchstone Corp.'s four-story retail project north of Northgate Mall opened in October 2000. As a condition of approval for the development, the City of Seattle required a right-of-way for the new Northeast 112th Street at the northern edge of the property. King County sold the southern portion of its park-and-ride lot on Fifth Avenue Northeast to the city in 1999 as the right-of-way for the new street. Touchstone is providing 60 replacement park-and-ride spaces in its parking structure until the 112th street park-and-ride lot is relocated.

Longer-term, the future development of a light rail stop is proposed as part of Sound Transit's Phase 1 plan, but is not yet funded. The funding of a light rail stop would make the Northgate Transit Center a significant, multi-modal transit hub serving as the terminus station, connecting north Seattle to surrounding communities and Snohomish County. It is assumed that light rail would be located east of First Avenue NE in an aerial alignment and that the new bus transit center would be located on the alignment of Second Avenue NE (there is no street at present). Third Avenue NE would be built at the eastern edge of the TOD project.

The Northgate Transit Center, which currently provides local and express bus services, is located north of the Northgate Mall parking lot. Long term plans for Sound Transit Link Light Rail identify the transit center as a major multi-modal hub with serving north Seattle and the surrounding communities, with express service to downtown Seattle, and bus connections to communities north and northeast of the city.

Seattle Northgate Regional Growth Center Parking Requirements			
	Min.	Max.	
Multi family	-	-	
Office	1	2.4	Per 1000 sf
Retail (general)	0.93	2.4	Per 1000 sf

Source: Application of Physical Design Guidelines in Regional Growth Centers Survey, 2002

Regional Growth Center references and contacts

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan: Toward a Sustainable Seattle: A Plan for Managing Growth 1994 – 2014, City of Seattle, 1994. (Updated January 2001)

Northgate Area Comprehensive Plan, City of Seattle, 1993.

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