

Puget Sound Regional Council  
**2002 Regional Growth Centers Report**

**SEATAC REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER**

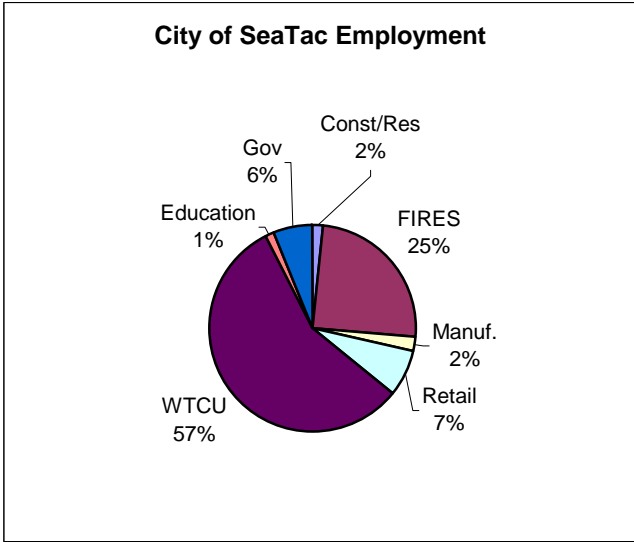
**Community Context**

The city of SeaTac is located in the highly urbanized area of southwest King County. SeaTac is surrounded by the cities of Kent, Des Moines, Normandy Park, Burien, and Tukwila. SeaTac encompasses 12.6 square miles bounded generally by I-5 on the east, the city of Des Moines on the south, SR-509 on the west, and S. 128<sup>th</sup> Street on the north. In 2000 the city of SeaTac had a population of 25,496, with 10,176 housing units. Over 10% of the city’s housing stock (1,093 units) consists of mobile homes. The city’s employment (31, 899 covered jobs) is strongly influenced by Sea-Tac Airport. As of 2000 over 56% of the city’s jobs were in the wholesale, transportation, communication, and utilities sector, with many of these jobs related to airlines, air cargo, and other aviation businesses.

After developing in unincorporated King County for its entire history, the city was incorporated in 1990. The city historically developed around Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and land use patterns reflect the airport’s influence on the city. Airport-related commercial and industrial development has occurred surrounding the airport. The airport’s most notable influence on SeaTac development can be seen along International Boulevard (SR-99), where airport-related parking, restaurants, hotels, retail businesses, and offices have located. The city’s commercial “strip” continues along SR-99 to the south city limits at S. 216<sup>th</sup> Street. Away from the airport’s influence, the city has a mix of low, medium, and high-density residential neighborhoods. The highest density residential areas are located along the east side of International Boulevard east of the airport, near Bow Lake. The city has significant parks and open space land immediately to the north and south of the airport. Much of this property was acquired by the Port of Seattle and the City of SeaTac as part of an airport noise compatibility program. The vast majority (84%) of the city’s land area is devoted to single family residential (34%), the airport (33%), and vacant (17%).

| <b>City-Wide Snapshot</b>  |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Area (square miles)        | 12.6   |
| Population (2000)          | 25,496 |
| Population per square mile | 2,023  |
| Employment (2000)          | 31,899 |
| Employees per square mile  | 2,532  |
| Housing units (2000):      | 10,176 |
| Employees per housing unit | 3.13   |

*Source: 2002 U.S. Census, Washington State Employment Security Department,  
Puget Sound Regional Council*



The majority of SeaTac employment is Wholesale trade, Transportation, Communication, and Utilities (WTCU) sector, due largely to the presence of Sea-Tac International Airport. Financial, Insurance, Real Estate, and Services (FIRES) provide 25 percent of the city’s employment, while Retail accounts for 7 percent and Government 6 percent.

| City-Wide Current Land Use    |             |      |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Residential - Multi family    | 134 Acres   | 3%   |
| Residential - Single family * | 1,796 Acres | 34%  |
| Commercial retail             | 290 Acres   | 5%   |
| Commercial office             | 42 Acres    | 1%   |
| Mixed use                     | 7 Acres     | 0%   |
| Industrial/warehouse          | 69 Acres    | 1%   |
| Institutional/civic           | 230 Acres   | 4%   |
| Parks/open space              | 92 Acres    | 2%   |
| Airport/airport related       | 1,774 Acres | 33%  |
| Vacant/undeveloped            | 880 Acres   | 17%  |
|                               | 5,314 Acres | 100% |

\* Includes 102 acres occupied by mobile homes

Source: City of SeaTac Comprehensive Plan

## **Comprehensive Plan**

SeaTac's 1994 comprehensive plan noted several community image issues, including:

- The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport has a major physical presence in the city
- The development along SeaTac's main commercial corridor, International Boulevard, is very linear
- Most of SeaTac's residential neighborhoods are concealed from the view of the non-resident
- Many of SeaTac's major arterial streets do not have street trees or sidewalks

Recognizing the impacts of the airport, the city is planning for compatible land uses in those areas closest to the airport. These include plans for airport industrial, industrial, business park, and aviation business on the west, north, and south sides of the airport. Additional commercial retail, offices, and high density housing are planned for the east side of International Boulevard. The remaining residential areas located north of SR-518 and the area between International Boulevard and I-5 are planned to remain as low to medium density residential neighborhoods.

To address the development issues specific to the SeaTac Regional Growth Center, the city developed the International Boulevard Center Subarea Plan. The plan addresses urban design, development of future transit station areas, the pedestrian environment, building design, parking, civic facilities, and linkages between the regional growth center, the airport, and the city's neighborhoods. The city has established the following targets for the regional growth center:

- Population: 17,391
- Housing units: 7,729
- Employment: 24,454

As of 2000, the center had achieved 62% of its population target, 59% of its housing target, and 39% of its employment target.

## **The Regional Growth Center**

### **Background**

SeaTac Regional Growth Center is a long narrow strip along SR-99 (International Boulevard) adjoining the east side of Sea-Tac Airport. The center stretches from SR-518 on the north to approximately South 212<sup>th</sup> Street on the south. The center is characterized by intense mixed commercial and office development, with low- to high-density residential uses (including several mobile home parks) on the hill rising to the east of International Boulevard, and surrounding Bow Lake. Much of the center's commercial activity is airport-related, including numerous hotels, restaurants, retail businesses, and airport parking. The center has seen rapid development related to growth in airport traffic in the past 20 years. New hotels, restaurants, and office buildings have sprouted up along International Boulevard in response to strong growth in passenger activity at the airport.

Major access to the center is provided by International Boulevard (SR-99), SR-518, South 188<sup>th</sup> Street, South 200<sup>th</sup> Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, and the airport access freeway. SR-518 connects the center with SR-509 to the west and Interstate 5 to the east. International Boulevard, the spine of the regional growth center, has been significantly improved in the past 10 years with the addition of HOV lanes, bus turnouts and shelters, center median and turn refuges, sidewalks, and landscaping. These projects have greatly improved the pedestrian atmosphere along SR-99. Private and public investments have started the process of creating a downtown for SeaTac in the area across International Boulevard from the airport terminal.

## Regional Growth Center Planning and Implementation

The city's plan for the regional growth center envisions three clusters, or nodes, of intensive development along International Boulevard (SR-99), each serving the needs of the adjoining mixed-use developments and nearby residential neighborhoods. These clusters would be developed as follows:

- North cluster: located around the intersection of SR-99, SR-518, and Military Road. This cluster would be auto-oriented
- Middle cluster: located as a gateway area across International Boulevard from the airport terminal. This cluster would be developed as SeaTac's downtown, and would include high density, high-rise mixed use office, commercial, entertainment, retail, and residential uses.
- South cluster: located at SR-99 and South 200<sup>th</sup> Street, this cluster would include an airport business center, offices, hotels, and multi-family residential use.

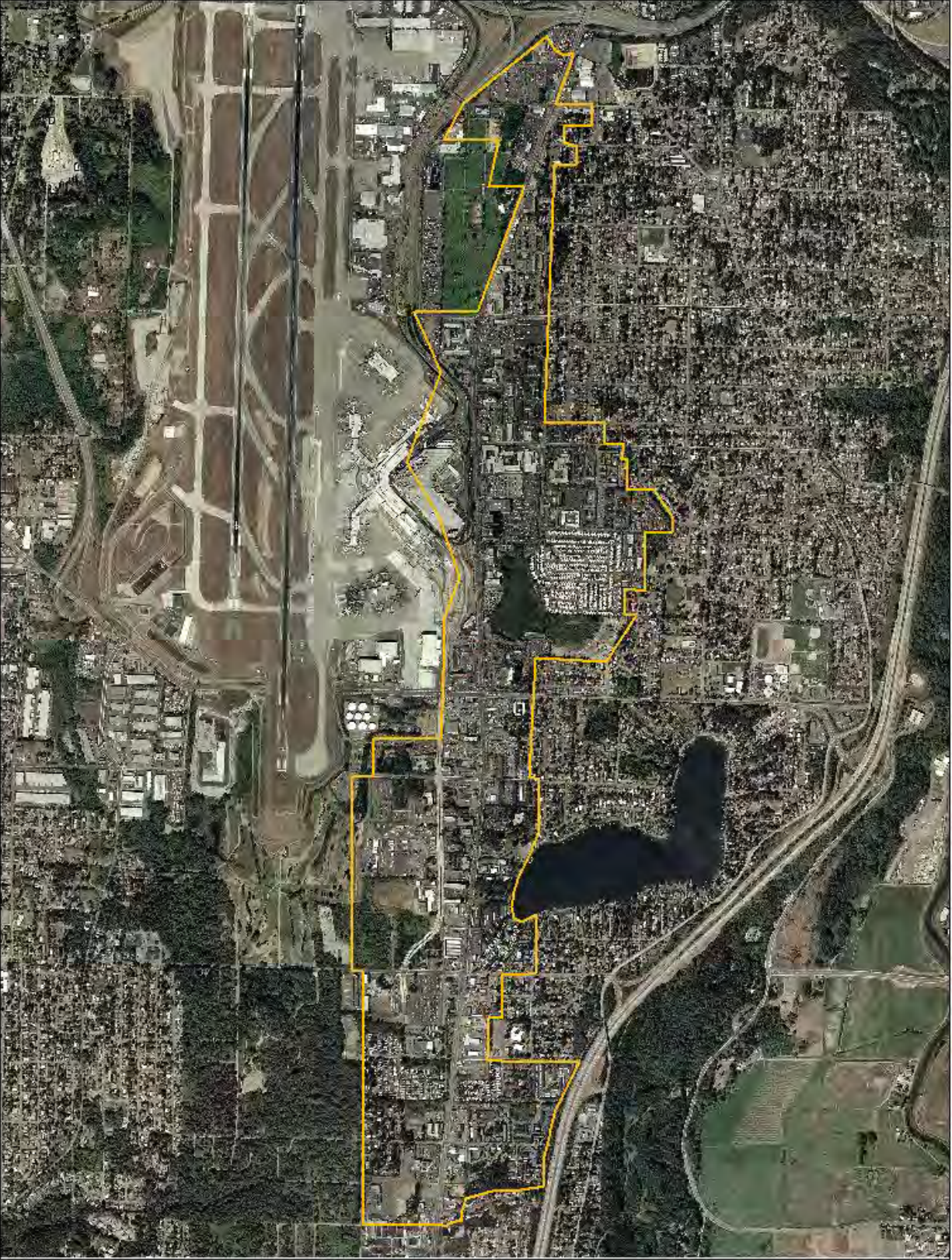
*See the map on the following page for a depiction of the SeaTac Regional Growth Center.*

The city's plans for the regional growth center envision high capacity transit (with the presently proposed Sound Transit LINK light rail or another system) will connect to each of these clusters, providing the regional growth center with good connections to the regional transportation system. In 1999 the city completed a City Center Sub-area Plan for the city's central commercial core, an area bounded by S. 166<sup>th</sup> Street, 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., S. 188<sup>th</sup> Street, and Sea-Tac Airport. While the City Center Sub-area Plan does not include the entire SeaTac Regional Growth Center, it includes the vast majority, including the most critical portion in the heart of the regional growth center. The city center plan identifies transportation system improvements, land use patterns, and design standards for new development in the area that the city hopes will result in high quality development.

The city center plan envisions a new "Main Street", which would extend along the current alignment of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. from S. 166<sup>th</sup> Street through the entire city center core to S. 188<sup>th</sup> Street. The new Main Street would be flanked by new high density mixed use development, which would include professional offices, retail, commercial, residential townhouses, and high density multi-family development. In addition, the new Main Street corridor would include plazas, open spaces, landscaping, internal pedestrian connections, and pedestrian connections across International Boulevard to the airport. These connections would also link the city center to the future Sound Transit *LINK* light rail S. 184<sup>th</sup> Street/City Center Station on the west side of International Boulevard, and would also link to a planned intermodal center at S. 170<sup>th</sup> Street. The city center plan also includes the proposed automated people mover, which would provide access within the center and would connect with other parts of the city.

One of the most critical issues in the city center area is the existing market for, and supply of, airport-related parking. A large portion of downtown SeaTac is devoted to large surface parking lots. To address this issue, the city has developed new city center parking standards that prohibit new stand-alone commercial parking lots. New parking facilities must now be associated with an underlying land use, such as residential or commercial development. The new regulations also require structured parking in most applications to reduce the amount of city center land devoted to parking.

Recent developments in the city center include a major remodel of the Hilton Hotel, which included installation of ½ of a planned new street (part of the city's vision of a more complete street grid in the regional growth center), as well as significant new pedestrian facilities to connect the remodeled hotel with other activities in the city center closer to International Boulevard. The city's plan for the center includes incremental construction of new streets as properties are developed and redeveloped.



## Population, Housing, and Employment

Between 1990 and 2000 SeaTac Regional Growth Center experienced strong population growth (up 27%) while housing units actually declined slightly (down 2%). The decline in housing units is partially explained by changes in the census blocks between 1990 and 2000. The number of persons per dwelling unit increased from 1.8 in 1990 to 2.4 in 2000. The center is making good progress toward its targets (62% of population and 59% of housing). SeaTac Regional Growth Center has an employment target of 24,454. As of 2000 the center had 9,533 employees (39% of its target).

VISION 2020 established a guideline of 10 households per acre and 25 employees per acre as goals for regional growth centers. As of 2000, SeaTac had achieved densities of 3 households per acre and 7 jobs per acre.

| <b>SeaTac Regional Growth Center<br/>Population, Housing, and Employment (2000)</b> |       |        |        |
|---|-------|--------|--------|
|   | 1990  | 2000   | Target |
| Population  | 8,472 | 10,749 | 17,391 |
| Persons per square mile   | 3,525 | 4,722  | -      |
| Housing units   | 4,605 | 4,530  | 7,729  |
| Housing units per gross acre  | 3.0   | 3.1    | -      |
| Households  | 4,196 | 4,329  | -      |
| Households per gross acre   | 2.7   | 3.0    | -      |
| Employment  | 7,081 | 9,533  | 24,454 |
| Employees per gross acre  | 5     | 7      | -      |
| Employees per housing unit  | 1.5   | 2.1    | -      |

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

| <b>SeaTac Regional Growth Center<br/>Employment by Sector (2000)</b> |            |
|--|------------|
| Employment Sector  | Percentage |
| Services   | 49%        |
| Retail   | 8%         |
| FIRE   | 3%         |
| WTCU   | 28%        |
| Manufacturing  | 0%         |
| Government/education   | 10%        |
| Construction/resources   | 2%         |

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

## Land Use, Character & Urban Form

The SeaTac Regional Growth Center is a linear corridor stretching about 3 miles along International Boulevard (SR-99). The presence of the airport along much of this corridor creates many economic opportunities, but also dominates the physical environment. The airport forms the western boundary of the regional growth center, and for safety and security reasons most of the airport property is fenced off. International Boulevard has spawned a long linear pattern of auto-oriented development which forms a significant barrier to east-west travel in the center, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. According to the city's comprehensive plan, many of the city's neighborhoods are separated from one another by major transportation corridors (such as International Boulevard), topography, and the airport itself. In addition, there is a profusion of large, tall signs and billboards that command attention and visually dominate the setting along International Boulevard.

The center contains a wide variety of land uses, including single family residential, high-rise hotels, mobile home parks, office buildings, restaurants, parks, airport parking, and the SeaTac city hall complex.

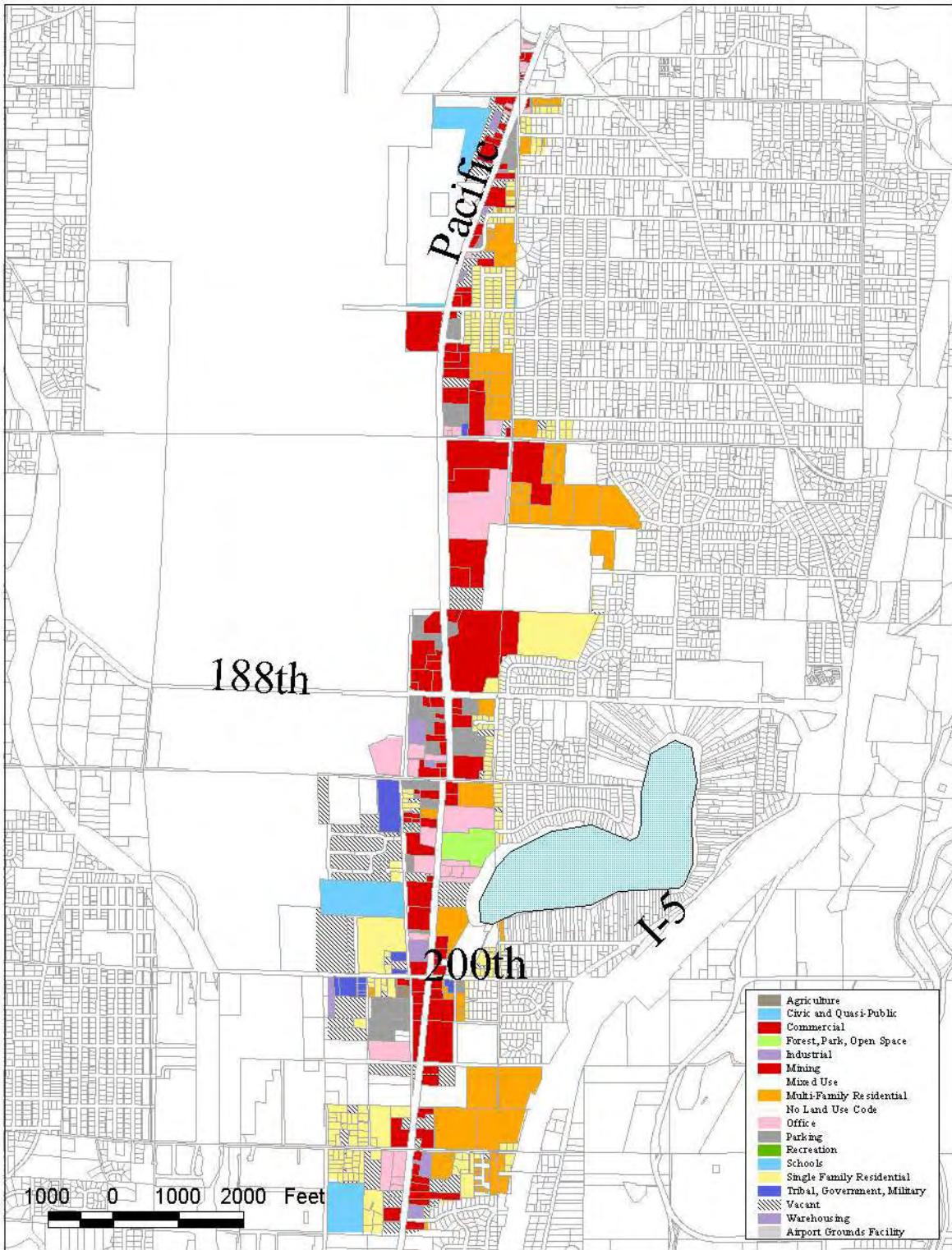
| SeaTac Regional Growth Center Existing Land Use |            |
|---|------------|
|   | Percentage |
| Agriculture                                     | 0.10%      |
| Civic/Quasi-public                              | 6.22%      |
| Commercial                                      | 14.75%     |
| Parks/Open Space                                | 0.85%      |
| Industrial                                      | 0.26%      |
| Mobile Home Park                                | 8.40%      |
| Residential – Multi family                      | 11.07%     |
| Office  | 5.09%      |
| Parking   | 3.14%      |
| Schools   | 1.54%      |
| Residential – Single Family                     | 16.97%     |
| Government/Military                             | 1.15%      |
| Unknown (No Data)                               | 18.97%     |
| Vacant  | 10.18%     |
| Warehousing                                     | 1.31%      |
| Total   | 100%       |
| Employment Related Land Use                     | 31.27%     |
| Residential Related Land Use                    | 36.44%     |

Source: City of SeaTac Comprehensive Plan (2000)

Residential development is the predominant land use in the SeaTac center, with multi-family residential accounting for 11% and single-family housing 17% of the center's area. An additional 8% is devoted to several mobile home parks, which will eventually be removed as part of the airport's noise mitigation program. This will provide for future development potential. Approximately 15% of current land use is commercial, and 10% is currently vacant. Civic and public uses account for 6% of the center's area.

*See the map on the following page for a depiction of existing land uses in the SeaTac Regional Growth Center.*

SeaTac Urban Center (Current Land Use)



The SeaTac center contains 59 blocks with an average size of 21.2 net acres. The center contains 1,069 parcels averaging slightly over one acre. The center has 27.8 linear miles of roadways and a low density of intersections (one intersection every 14 acres).

| <b>SeaTac Regional Growth Center Character and Urban Form</b> |       |
|---|-------|
| Total area (acres)  | 1,457 |
| Number of blocks  | 59    |
| Average block size (gross acres)                              | 24.7  |
| Number of parcels   | 1,069 |
| Average parcel size (net acres)                               | 1.17  |
| Road network (linear miles)                                   | 27.5  |
| Intersection density (intersections/acre)                     | .07   |

*Source: Puget Sound Regional Council*

Planned future land use for the regional growth center was derived from the land use element of SeaTac’s 1994 comprehensive plan. The plan calls for primarily high intensity commercial (along SR-99), with multi-family residential along the east edge (most planned for 12-18 units per acre), plus two areas of very high density residential (24-87 units per acre) near Bow Lake and Angle Lake.

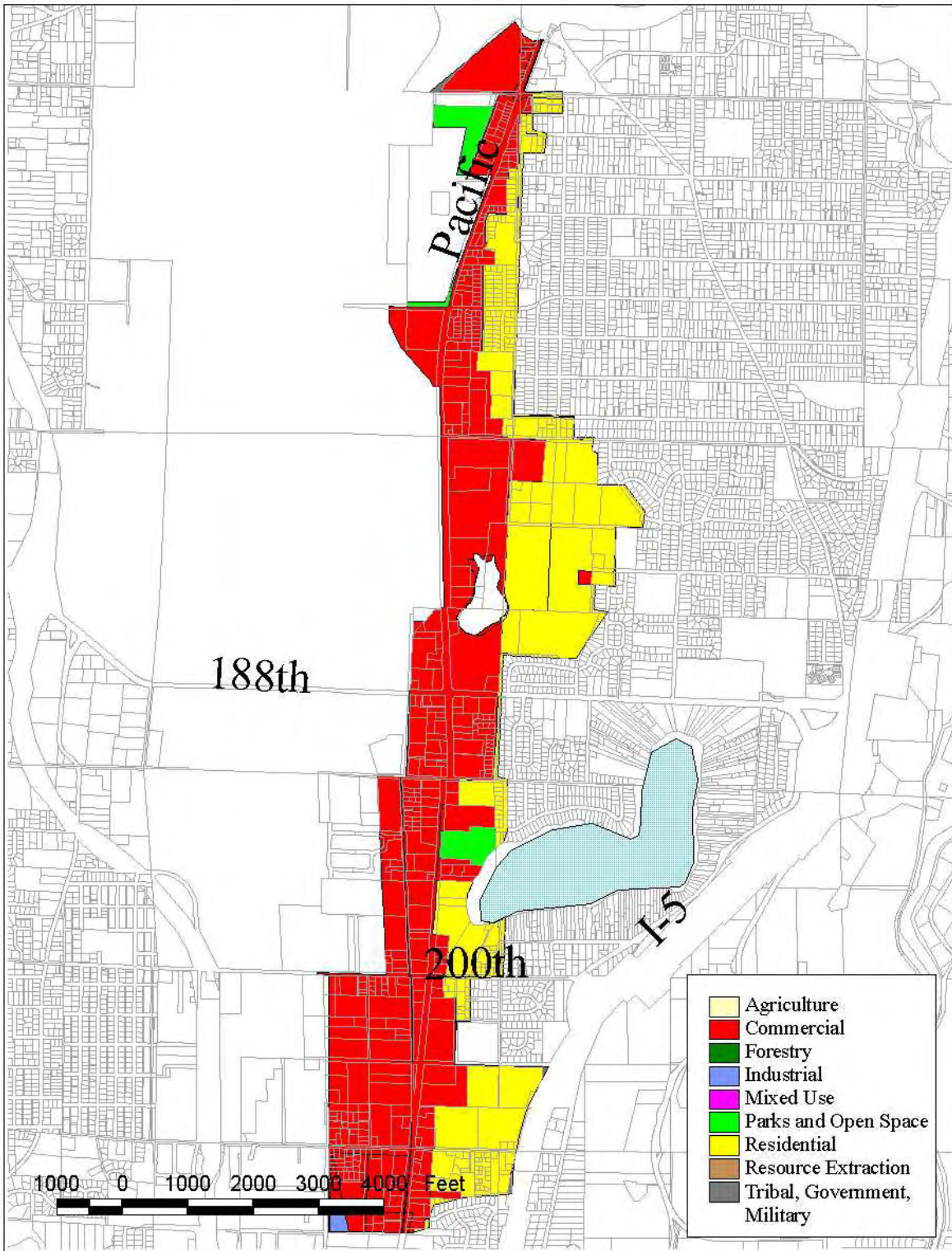
| <b>SeaTac Regional Growth Center Future Land Use</b> |            |
|--|------------|
|  | Percentage |
| Aviation Business Center                             | 15.13%     |
| Business Park  | 0.32%      |
| Commercial   | 1.09%      |
| Commercial High Intensity                            | 36.33%     |
| Commercial Low Intensity                             | 0.29%      |
| Commercial Medium Intensity                          | 2.38%      |
| Park   | 8.36%      |
| Regional Commercial                                  | 1.35%      |
| Residential High Density                             | 5.44%      |
| Residential Low Density                              | 5.50%      |
| Residential Medium Density                           | 21.97%     |
| Rural Residential - RD (1du/2.3ac)                   | 0.07%      |
| Water  | 1.78%      |
| Total  | 100%       |

*Source: City of SeaTac Comprehensive Plan (2000)*

The city of SeaTac’s plan shows 36% of future land use allocated to high intensity commercial. Much of this development will be oriented toward hotels, restaurants, and other commercial activity associated with the airport. Medium density residential area will account for 22% of the center, with low and high density residential areas making up 11%. An Aviation Business Center is also planned, which will comprise 15% of the center, and the plan calls for 8% of the urban growth center to be devoted to parks.

*See the map on the following page for a depiction of planned future land uses in the SeaTac Regional Growth Center.*

SeaTac Urban Center (Future Land Use)



## Transportation and Access

The primary freeway access connecting SeaTac Regional Growth Center with the region is SR-518, with an interchange at SR-99 at the north end of the center. Access to and through SeaTac Regional Growth Center is dominated by International Boulevard (SR-99), which traverses the entire center from north to south. SR-99 has been improved between South 170<sup>th</sup> Street and South 200<sup>th</sup> Street, and has four through lanes, center median, left turn refuges, HOV lanes, transit pullouts and shelters, landscaping, sidewalks, lighting, underground utilities, and drainage improvements. SR-518 provides connections from the center to SR-509 on the west and I-5 on the east, and also provides connections to the airport access freeway.

Other major regional growth center arterials include South Military Road, South 188<sup>th</sup> Street, South 200<sup>th</sup> Street, and South 216<sup>th</sup> Street.

While International Boulevard has been improved with sidewalks and landscaping, many of the streets in the SeaTac Regional Growth Center do not have sidewalks, and create a hostile environment for pedestrians. The center's large, suburban scale blocks (averaging over 20 acres) also contribute to the lack of pedestrian scale.

Metro Transit and Sound Transit operate seven bus routes SeaTac Regional Growth Center, with an average am peak period headway of one bus every 28 minutes. Due to the north-south linear nature of the center, the existing bus routes provide little east-west service inside the center or between the center and other parts of the city. In addition, some of the bus service to the center is actually serving the airport and does not provide convenient access to local residents. Additional airport shuttles provide passengers with access between the airport terminal and off-airport parking, downtown Seattle, and other destinations around the region, but this service does not serve the local access needs of SeaTac residents.

Sea-Tac International Airport, the central Puget Sound region's primary passenger and air cargo airport, provides the region with a gateway to the world. In the year 2000 the airport served over 28 million passengers and over 500,000 tons of air cargo.

The center has no passenger or freight rail service, but Sound Transit plans to build a LINK light rail line through the center. This line, when complete, will connect the airport and SeaTac Regional Growth Center with downtown Seattle via light rail. Three tentative light rail stations are shown in the city's comprehensive plan for the following locations: (1) at the north end of the center near the intersection of SR-99 and South 158<sup>th</sup> Street; (2) in the area of the main airport passenger terminal (on the west side of SR-99); and (3) near the intersection of SR-99 and South 200<sup>th</sup> Street. SeaTac officials are coordinating with Sound Transit and the Port of Seattle in more detailed planning for the LINK light rail route and station locations within the city of SeaTac.

In addition to Sound Transit's proposed LINK light rail line, the city of SeaTac is planning a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system that would serve the regional growth center as well as areas north, west, and south of the airport. The system is envisioned as an elevated monorail style system. The proposed PRT would serve the regional growth center with service along International Boulevard and a loop to the east in the downtown area, and would also serve the airport terminal.

| <b>SeaTac Regional Growth Center<br/>Transit Routes and Frequencies<br/>(AM Peak Period)</b> |         |                       |              |
|--|---------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Item   | Route # | Destination           | Freq         |
| 1  | 170     | Seattle               | 30.00        |
| 2  | 174     | Seattle               | 25.43        |
|  |         | Federal Way           | 32.40        |
| 3  | 191     | Seattle               | 25.80        |
| 4  | 194     | Seattle-Federal Way   | 29.09        |
| 5  | 340     | Burien                | 23.00        |
|  |         | Bellevue or Shoreline | 25.13        |
| 6  | 570     | Seattle-Seatac        | 30.00        |
| 7  | 574     | Lakewood-SeaTac       | 34.67        |
|  |         |                       | <b>28.39</b> |

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

### Transit station areas

Sound Transit plans to build a Link light rail line through the center. This line, when complete, will connect the airport and SeaTac Regional Growth Center with downtown Seattle via light rail. A temporary terminus station will be constructed at South 154th Street and International Boulevard in SeaTac, just north of the regional growth center boundary. A shuttle bus will connect passengers to SeaTac International Airport, which is located about 1 mile away. It will be an elevated station with an adjacent park-and-ride lot with 670 spaces. Sound Transit is exploring opportunities to extend light rail through the airport to South 200th Street (within the Regional growth center). Extending light rail to the airport involves a partnership with the Port of Seattle. The Port has not begun its environmental work or identified financing for a new terminal that would be served by light rail. Because of that uncertainty, light rail cannot be built at the airport at this time.

In addition to Sound Transit's proposed Link light rail line, the city of SeaTac is planning a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system that would serve the regional growth center as well as areas north, west, and south of the airport. The system is envisioned as an elevated monorail style system. The proposed PRT would serve the regional growth center with service along International Boulevard and a loop to the east in the downtown area, and would also serve the airport terminal.

| <b>SeaTac Regional Growth Center Parking Requirements</b> |        |        |  |
|---|--------|--------|--|
|   | Min.   | Max.   |  |
| Multi family  | Varies | Varies |  |
| Office  | Varies | Varies |  |
| Retail (general)  | Varies | Varies |  |
| Restaurant, other   | Varies | Varies |  |

Source: Regional Growth Center Physical Design Guideline Survey (2002)

### Regional growth center references and contacts

*City of SeaTac Comprehensive Plan* (1999)

*SeaTac City Center Sub-area Plan* (1999)

Steve Butler

206-241-1893