

Puget Sound Regional Council
2002 Regional Growth Centers Report

TUKWILA REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER

Community Context

Tukwila is one of the region's oldest suburban cities, incorporated in 1908. The city of Tukwila is bordered by the cities of Seattle on the north, SeaTac on the west, Renton on the east, and Kent on the south. Tukwila is a long narrow city oriented in a north-south direction following the Duwamish River valley. The city is seven miles long and an average of about 1 mile wide. The city contains 8.8 square miles and in 2000 had a population of 17,181. With its emphasis on both commercial and industrial development, Tukwila has a significant job base, with nearly 50,000 covered jobs in 2000. Many of these jobs are located within the city's regional growth center (22,749) and manufacturing center (11,881). A portion of King County International Airport (Boeing Field) is located inside the Tukwila city limits (and inside the North Tukwila Manufacturing center), at the far north end of the city.

The city's commercial and civic center is located in the Southcenter area, at the intersection of two of the region's major freeways: I-5 and I-405. The city of Tukwila is served by several major freeways and arterial streets, including: I-5, I-405, SR-599, SR-99 (Pacific Highway South), East Marginal Way/Interurban Avenue/West Valley Highway, Southcenter Boulevard, and South 180th Street. The city also has several major railroad lines, which serve the North Tukwila manufacturing center as well as the light industrial areas near Southcenter, such as the Andover Industrial Park and Koll Business Park.

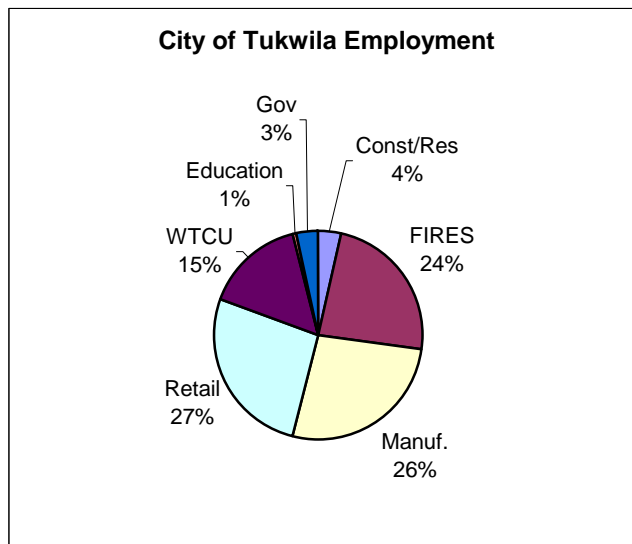
The city contains two regional centers: the Tukwila Regional Growth Center, which contains the Southcenter Mall area, and the North Tukwila Manufacturing/Industrial Center, located at the north end of the city adjoining the Duwamish manufacturing center in the city of Seattle (see the manufacturing/industrial centers section of this report).

Although Tukwila has experienced relatively modest population growth in the past decade (growing from 11,874 in 1990 to 17,181 in 2000), the city has seen significant growth in commercial and industrial activity. Much of this growth has been in the manufacturing center, along Pacific Highway South, and in the areas surrounding Southcenter Mall. In the Southcenter area, commercial and retail development includes expansions at Southcenter Mall (Mervyns was added in 1992), other smaller malls and strip retail centers (Parkway Plaza, Pavilion Mall redevelopment), restaurants, theaters, furniture stores (Bon Marche, J.C. Penney, Levitz, etc.), and "big box" outlets (Ross Dress for Less, Gart Sports, etc.). In addition, the area south and east of the Southcenter Mall has seen significant growth in light industrial, warehousing, and related office space.

In addition to these urban developments, the city of Tukwila contains several natural features and amenities, including Tukwila Pond (located across Strander Boulevard from the mall), Minkler Pond, and the Green River.

Tukwila City-Wide Snapshot	
Area (square miles)	8.8
Population (2000)	17,181
Population per square mile	1,952
Employment (2000)	49,829
Employees per square mile	5,662
Housing units (2000):	7,725
Employees per housing unit	6.45

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



The city of Tukwila has three equally significant categories of employment, each accounting for about one quarter of the center's area. These are: (1) Financial, Insurance, Real Estate, and Services, (2) Retail, and (3) Manufacturing. Also, Wholesale trade, Transportation, Communication, and Utilities provide 15% of the city's employment.

Comprehensive Plan

The city of Tukwila has an active planning program for the city as a whole, as well as specific area plans for the regional growth center, the manufacturing center, the Pacific Highway corridor, and the riverfront area along the Green River, which forms the eastern border of the regional growth center. Part of the city's vision is to build upon the area's history as a crossroads. This includes taking advantage of the Duwamish/Green River, the area's highways, and railroads.

The city is planning for the Tukwila Regional Growth Center to become a high-density, regionally oriented, mixed use center that will contain fixed-rail transit service (Sound Transit) and other transit services, and pedestrian improvements. The center will include regional employment, limited mixed-use housing, shopping, offices, hotels, and recreational opportunities for business people, residents, and visitors. The plan would allow building heights up to 115 feet in a special development district to be located along Strander Boulevard. This district would provide intense mixed-use development, with the

goal of creating a transit and pedestrian friendly corridor along Strander Boulevard. This would eventually become Tukwila's downtown.

Tukwila Pond is to be developed as a major open space feature adjoining the Strander Boulevard Special Development District. The pond area would include a passive park, wildlife viewing areas, trails, and public promenade. Pedestrian/bike paths are planned to connect the Tukwila Pond area to Strander Boulevard, Southcenter Parkway, Southcenter Mall, and the Green River. To the south and west of the pond area, and along Southcenter Boulevard, the plan envisions continued development of regional retail uses. To the south and east of these areas, the plan encourages light industrial, warehouse and distribution uses in support of the center's retail commercial district.

Along the east edge of the regional growth center, the plan envisions a Riverfront District that would capitalize on the value of the Green River to the community. Multi-family residential would be the primary allowed use in this district. Resident population in the riverfront district could take advantage of the planned transit service improvement, the services and amenities planned for the Strander Boulevard district, and would also be connected to the surrounding region via the existing Green River Trail. The riverfront district would be within walking distance of many of the amenities of the center, such as the mall, restaurants, hotels, entertainment, parks and open space improvements, pedestrian amenities, and improved transportation facilities.

The Regional Growth Center

Background

In the past 40 years the Tukwila Regional Growth Center has evolved from farms, dairies, and nurseries into a major retail shopping and employment center. The 840-acre center provides nearly 23,000 jobs, over 3.5 million square feet of retail space, 1,200 hotel rooms, and 5.6 million square feet of warehousing and distribution services. The heart of the regional growth center is Southcenter Mall, built in 1968. The mall contains some 170 stores and vendors, and draws 20 million annual shoppers. With the mall as its nucleus, the adjoining areas along Southcenter Parkway, Andover Park West, and Strander Boulevard have exploded with commercial and retail development in the past 10 years. Roadways serving the center include Southcenter Parkway, Andover Park West, Andover Park East, Strander Boulevard, Minkler Boulevard, and South 180th Street. These roads have been improved to accommodate traffic growth in the past 10 years.

While the center has seen plenty of commercial, retail, and light industrial growth, it has yet to experience significant residential development. As of the year 2000 the regional growth center had a population of 22 people. There is a large area of multi-family housing located across I-405 from the regional growth center, near city hall.

See the aerial photo on the following page for a depiction of the Tukwila Regional Growth Center



Regional Growth Center Planning and Implementation

The city of Tukwila is planning for a dramatic metamorphosis in its regional growth center. Whereas the center now has virtually no housing, and is dominated by large blocks, the Southcenter Shopping Mall, and other large retail development, the city's plan shows a different future. The plan encourages a broader mix of uses, establishes specific pedestrian oriented areas, links open spaces, amenities, and activity areas, improves internal circulation, reduces congestion, and promotes transportation alternatives. The city's plan includes a regional growth center redevelopment strategy that has as its goal the transition of the center from a successful suburban center to a regional growth center. The strategy includes prioritized city CIP investments to support planned development, and financial incentives for private investment in the center. The plan will break up the existing mega-blocks to relieve congestion, create smaller, more pedestrian friendly blocks, and provide improved internal traffic flow. The plan will build connections between the regional growth center and Sound Transit's commuter and light rail stations and create a multi-modal transit center. In addition, the city is considering changes to its parking regulations as the availability of other transportation modes increases.

A key component of the city's regional growth center planning effort is to create a new residential development along the Green River, as well as significant investment in improvements around Tukwila Pond. In addition, the plan includes \$2.4 million in sidewalk and landscaping improvements and construction of 4.5 miles of new sidewalks. The city's regional growth center plan also addresses nearby areas. The plan includes connections to and beyond the Sounder/Amtrak station to future redevelopment of the former Longacres site. The city of Tukwila briefed the Regional Council Growth Management Policy Board about its planning efforts in October 2002 .

Population, Housing, and Employment

Development in the Tukwila Regional Growth Center has focused almost exclusively on retail, commercial, office, and light industrial use, and almost no residential development exists. As of the year 2000, the center had a population of 22 people living in 2 recorded housing units. This was up from no residents in 1990. The city has not established population, housing unit, or employment targets for the regional growth center.

On the other hand the center has a significant employment base. As of 2000 there were 22,749 covered jobs in the regional growth center. These jobs reflect the retail and commercial focus of the area's businesses: 49% of the jobs in the center are devoted to retail, and services comprise 21%. Wholesale trade, transportation, communications, and utilities jobs comprise another 15%, with industrial jobs accounting for 11% of the total. The remaining 4% are related to construction, finance, insurance, and real estate.

In 2000 the center had 27 jobs per gross acre, comparing favorably with the Regional Council's guideline for regional growth centers as contained in *VISION 2020*: 25 jobs per gross acre. In addition, the Tukwila regional growth center has more than achieved the *VISION 2020* guideline for total jobs in a regional growth center, with 22,749 jobs as compared with the guideline of 15,000 total jobs. The center is clearly achieving the type of employment base that is envisioned in the regional plan. And while the Tukwila Regional Growth Center has virtually no residents, the city's comprehensive plan calls for the center to have concentrated high density multi family development along the Green River, within walking distance of the future downtown.

Tukwila Regional Growth Center Population, Housing, and Employment (2000)			
	1990	2000	Target
Population	0	22	n/a
Persons per square mile	0	17	-
Housing units	0	2	n/a
Housing units per gross acre	0	0	-
Households	0	2	-
Households per gross acre	0	0	-
Employment*	17,052	22,749	n/a
Employees per gross acre	20	27	-
Employees per housing unit	n/a	11,375	-
<i>*Employment data is for 1995</i>			

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

Tukwila Regional Growth Center Employment by Sector	
Services	21%
Retail	49%
FIRE	2%
WTCU	15%
Manufacturing	11%
Government/education	0%
Construction/resources	2%

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

Land Use, Character & Urban Form

The Tukwila Regional Growth Center contains a mix of high intensity retail, commercial, industrial, and office uses. The center's primary focus is Southcenter Shopping Mall, which has 170 retail stores and parking for over 7,000 cars. The mall, built in 1968, draws 18-20 million shoppers per year. The mall is bounded by Tukwila Parkway (and I-405) on the north, Southcenter Boulevard (and I-5) on the west, Strander Boulevard on the south, and Andover Park West on the east. Since its opening 34 years ago, the mall has been a magnet for significant development in the area. Retail commercial growth has occurred east and south of the mall, and hotels and restaurants are now located in the vicinity. The area near the mall now includes many restaurants, a Doubletree Suites Hotel, and a Courtyard by Marriott hotel. Commercial retail development along Southcenter Parkway and Strander Boulevard has evolved over the past 30 years. Between 1970 and 1990 scattered smaller retail businesses dominated in the strip along Southcenter Parkway. In the past 10 years, however, the area has seen demolition of earlier buildings (such as Parkway Plaza) and redevelopment into new "big box" stores, such as Gart Sports, the Sports Authority, Ross Dress for Less, and other national retailers. To the south of the retail core the center has

developed into an intense mix of warehouse and manufacturing uses that take advantage of the area's highway and railroad infrastructure.

Tukwila center contains 840 acres divided into 38 blocks. The center has an average block size of 22 acres, triple the average for all 21 centers (7 acres). This large block size reflects the auto-oriented nature of the center, which is focused on the shopping mall, large retail stores, manufacturing and warehouse uses, and virtually no residential development. The center contains 311 tax parcels with an average of 2.4 acres each. The center contains over 14 linear miles of roadways, and an intersection density of one intersection for each 16 acres. This translates to an average block length of 800 feet, as compared with downtown Seattle, with an average block size of 1.5 acres and average block length of 250 feet. With its wide, busy streets, large parking lots, large blocks, and long distances between intersections, Tukwila is not very friendly to pedestrians.

Tukwila Regional Growth Center Character and Urban Form	
Total area (acres)	840
Number of blocks	38
Average block size (gross acres)	22.1
Number of parcels	311
Average parcel size (net acres)	2.4
Road network (linear miles)	14.5
Intersection density (intersections/acre)	.06

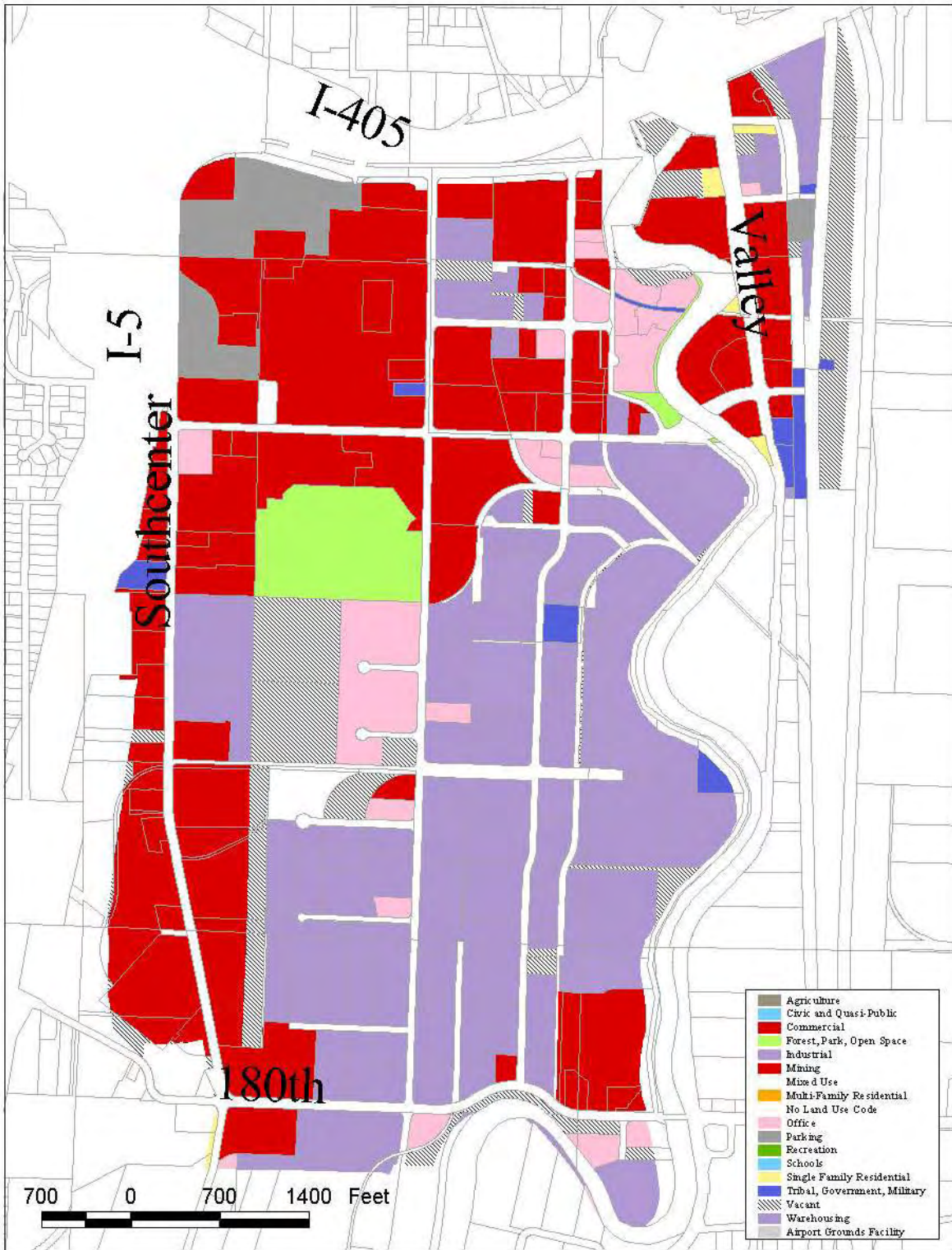
Source: Puget Sound Regional Council

As of the year 2000, some 31 percent of the Tukwila Regional Growth Center contained commercial business uses, while warehousing accounted for 25 percent. Industrial and office use account for 7 percent and 5 percent, respectively, while nearly 10 percent of the center land is vacant. Residential development is almost nonexistent. As of the year 2000, the center had a total population of just 22 persons. See the map on the following page for a depiction of current land use Tukwila Regional Growth Center.

Tukwila Regional Growth Center Existing Land Use	
	Percentage
Commercial	30.60%
Parks/Open Space	3.21%
Industrial	6.78%
Office	4.85%
Parking	2.92%
Residential – Single Family	0.33%
Government/Military	0.58%
Unknown (No Data)	16.15%
Vacant	9.45%
Warehousing	25.13%
Total	100%
Employment Related Land Use	67.94%
Residential Related Land Use	0.33%

Source: King County Assessor's records

Tukwila Urban Center (Current Land Use)



The Tukwila Regional Growth Center is planned as a regional mixed-use center, with commercial, retail, industrial, and residential uses. The plan calls for a balance of access, including motor vehicle, pedestrian, and transit modes.

Tukwila Regional Growth Center Future Land Use	
	Percentage
Highway	0.09%
Low Density Residential	4.78%
Mixed Use Office	0.48%
Tukwila Urban Center *	94.65%
Total	100%
* This designation allows for a mix of retail, commercial, office, industrial, and residential.	

Source: The City of Tukwila Comprehensive Plan, Puget Sound Regional Council

See the map on the following page for a depiction of Tukwila Regional Growth Center planned future land use.

Transportation and Access

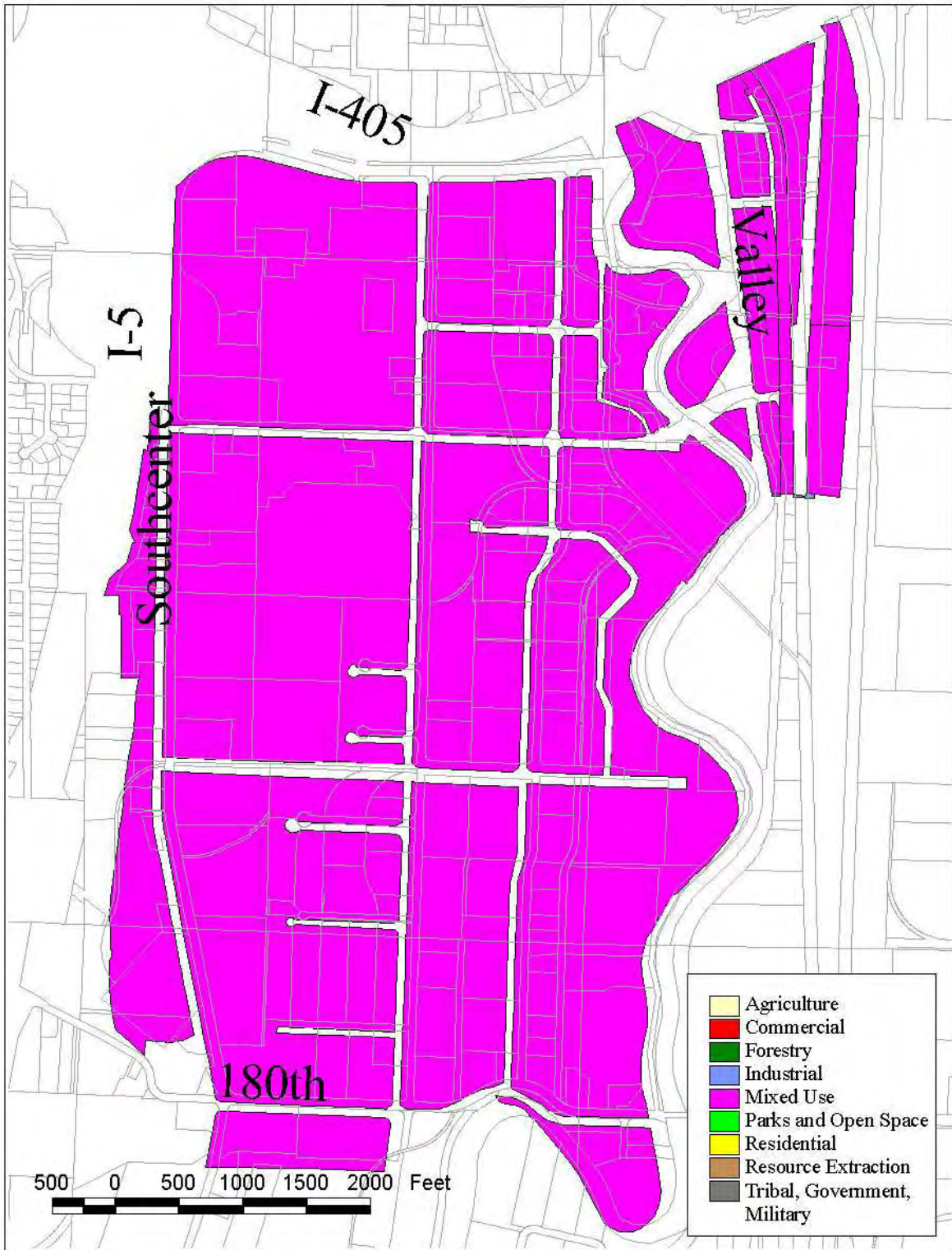
Being at the crossroads of I-5 and I-405, Tukwila Regional Growth Center has excellent access to the region’s freeways system. Interchanges on both major interstate highways provide convenient access to the centers. Other major arterial streets in the center include Southcenter Parkway, Tukwila Parkway, Andover Park W., Andover Park E., Strander Boulevard, Minkler Boulevard, and S. 180th Street. Many of these roadways are 4 to 7-lane arterials that carry high volumes of passenger vehicles as well as heavy truck traffic to and from the center. The center contains a modest internal street grid. The presence of numerous railroad spurs throughout the center prevents the completion of a more complete street grid.

Tukwila center contains a significant freight railroad system, which serves the center’s many industrial and warehousing businesses. Next to the SeaTac Regional Growth Center, Tukwila is the closest regional growth center to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, providing Tukwila with excellent access to the region’s primary commercial aviation facility.

While the center does not contain many pedestrian or bicycle facilities, it does connect to the Green River Trail, which connects to the regional trail system.

9 regional and local bus routes serve the Tukwila Regional Growth Center, which average one bus every 34 minutes in the am peak period.

Tukwila Urban Center (Future Land Use)



Tukwila Regional Growth Center Transit Routes and Frequencies (AM Peak Period)			
Item	Route #	Destination	Freq
1	128	W. Seattle-Southcenter	30.00
2	150	Kent	16.00
*	150	Auburn	30.00
4	160	Glencarin	30.00
5	163	East Hill	30.00
*	160/163	Tukwila-Seattle	15.00
6	124	Southcenter -Tukwila P&R	60.00
7	155	Fairwood- Southcenter	60.00
8	154	Boeing-Auburn	60.00
9	340	Burien	23.00
*	340	Bellevue or Shoreline	25.13
			34.47

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

The Tukwila Commuter Rail Station is temporarily located directly adjacent to the Longacres property. About 250 parking stalls are currently available. The City of Tukwila and Sound Transit are exploring transit-oriented development (TOD) at the site to enhance the city and expand Sounder ridership. Along with this development, Sound Transit will be building the permanent station with an opening date in February 2004. The permanent station plan features station platforms with a pedestrian tunnel connecting both sides of the track. The design of Tukwila Station also accommodates the potential for future Amtrak service. Sound Transit has purchased a 10.5-acre station site near Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad tracks, south of Longacres Way and north of the future Stander Blvd. Right-of-way in Tukwila, for this station. This facility has a great potential of attracting ridership from Boeing's Longacres campus and Boeing's Renton facility will be easily reached from the station by King County Metro bus.

Tukwila Regional Growth Center Parking Requirements			
	Min.	Max.	
Residential	2	No Limit	Per dwelling unit
Office	3	No Limit	Per 1000 sf
Retail (general)	4	No Limit	Per 1000 sf
Manufacturing	1	No Limit	Per 1000 sf

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

Regional Growth Center References and Contacts

City of Tukwila Comprehensive Plan (1995)

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