

Federal Way

Federal Way, a city with a 2010 population of 89,306 residents, was incorporated in February 1990. Federal Way began in the late 1800s as a logging settlement. Isolated on a triangular shaped plateau rising steeply from the Puget Sound just northeast of Tacoma, the area had little access to either the waterfront or to roadways and was largely undeveloped until after World War II. By the 1920s, Highway 99 reached the area, which was still largely forest and farmland. Shortly before World War II, a number of small communities emerged, forming the core of what is now Federal Way. A small community was built along the edge of Highway 99, and 308th Street and 320th Street, including a general store, library, lumber yard, realty office, beauty parlor, feed store, and gas station.

By the end of the 1950s, the 10 blocks between 308th Street and 320th Streets became the future city’s first roadside commercial district with a shopping center and family-oriented theme park. Residential development continued through the 1960s, providing homes to Boeing engineers and Weyerhaeuser executives. Retail growth followed, including the construction of SeaTac Mall in the mid-1970s. Located close to the 320th Street intersection with I-5, which supplanted Highway 99 as the main artery for commuter traffic in the county, The Commons is the anchor for retail development in the area. Also in the 1970s the Weyerhaeuser Company developed both high quality housing with amenities like golf courses, as well as commercial property, creating the West Campus business park. West Campus eventually provided space for Federal Way’s City Hall, police station, and the area’s major health care centers. During the 1970s and 1980s, rapid retail and residential growth created significant changes in the community.

Due to the history of the area and the character of existing development, the City of Federal Way currently lacks the traditional downtown core common to many other cities in the region. Most of the center is currently developed with low intensity uses and current land use patterns favor auto-oriented commercial activity. The Commons at Federal Way is the most prominent development in the area. Steel Lake Park to the northeast and Celebration Park to the southwest are close to the center.

Acreage, Density & Mix of Activity

Federal Way is among the smallest regional growth centers in terms of total gross acreage (200 acres) with a net developable acreage of 175 acres (88% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city overall, Federal Way contains 1 percent of the city’s land area, 0 percent of the population, 0 percent of the housing, and 11 percent of the employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Federal Way has among the smallest number of total activity units (3,183), with exclusively employment-oriented activity (100%) and low density of activity (15.9 units per gross acre).

2010 Summary Statistics

Land Use	
Gross acreage	200
Average block size (acres)	20.4
Average parcel size (acres)	2.6
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	n/a
Population+Employee/acre	n/a
Population	
Total population	0
Population density/acre	n/a
Change (2000–2010)	0
Employment	
Total employment	3,183
Employment density/acre	15.9
Change (2000–2010)	-801
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	n/a
Employee access to transit	93%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	79% • 9%
Walk & Bike / Transit	3% • 9%

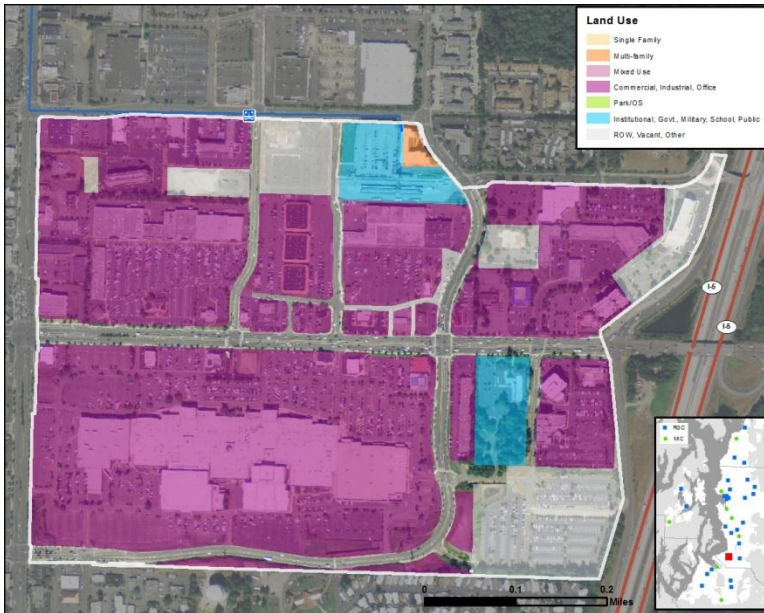
Urban Amenities

Food & Drink	
Restaurants	42
Grocery	2
Cafes & Bars	9
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	-
Laundry & Haircuts	6
Home supplies	5
Clothing & Shoes	27
Banks	8
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	3
Electronics & Toys	2
Bookstores & Libraries	1
Arts & Culture	2
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	-
Schools & Childcare	1
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	-
Pharmacy	-
Healthcare	7
Residential Care Centers	-

Urban Form

Federal Way's average parcel size is 2.6 acres, which is much larger than the average size for growth centers. Federal Way provides a challenging pedestrian environment, with a partially complete network of sidewalks (79% coverage) and large super-blocks at a 20.4 acre average size.

The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Federal Way has a moderate set of urban amenities (115 total amenities / 0.58 amenities per gross acre). Food/Drink (50%) and Home (37%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Restaurants and Clothing/Shoes.



Land Use

Federal Way is dominated by a very limited set of current land uses that are almost exclusively non-residential uses (80%) in terms of total net land area. The major land uses are commercial (80%) and vacant developable (11%).

Employment

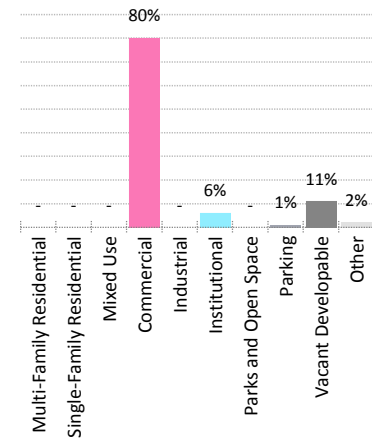
The total employment in Federal Way is 3,182, and it decreased by 802 jobs from 2000 to 2010. The major industry sectors are Other/Suppressed (58%) and Retail (33%). Major employers in the center include retailers based in The Commons at Federal Way.

Transportation

For work-based trips, the Federal Way regional center's travel characteristics are similar to the region as a whole. The region's single-occupant vehicle (SOV) share is 76 percent, while the center's share is 79 percent. The region's non-SOV mode share is 24 percent, with 10 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The center's non-SOV share is 21 percent, with 9 percent in transit and 3 percent in walk/bike. Total daily trips from the Federal Way center are slightly focused on destinations in regional centers (17% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (10%) and trips that go to other centers (7%).

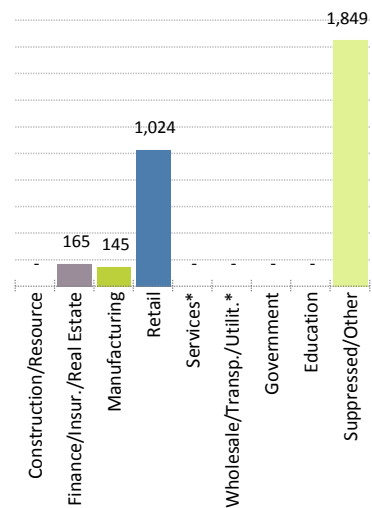
Current Land Use

(175 net acres)



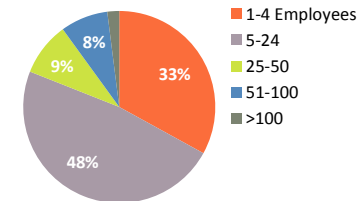
Jobs by Sector

(3,183 jobs)

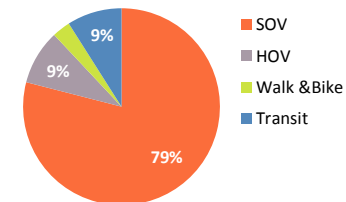


Size of Businesses

(185 workplaces)



Mode Shares

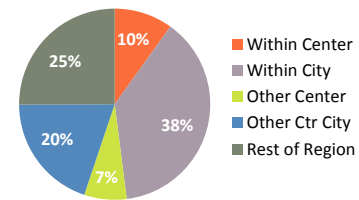


In terms of employee access to transit, Federal Way has nearly complete access, with 93 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk of transit.

Plan Overview

The City of Federal Way's comprehensive plan includes the City Center element devoted to its designated regional growth center. The element was first adopted as part of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, and was most recently updated in 2010. The plan focuses primarily on land use, transportation, and urban design within the center. The city has established and designated two planning districts designed to transform the area into a compact, vibrant center.

Trip Destinations



Comparison to Center Plan Checklist

The city's primary center planning document was reviewed to evaluate the extent to which the plan addresses topics in the PSRC Regional Center Plan Checklist. This policy-level review of the current plan is intended both to provide preliminary assessment of consistency of the plan with center guidelines and to evaluate the Regional Centers Checklist for any potential improvements.

The plan addresses many of the required elements of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. The city has adopted a clear vision statement for its regional growth center that supports VISION 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy. An overview of the city's planning efforts for the city center in relation to VISION 2020 and the King County countywide planning policies (CPPs) is included in the element. Findings from a 2002 market analysis regarding the opportunities for development are also outlined. The City Center element summarizes and maps the existing conditions within the center, including the developed land, land uses designations, parks and open space, civic buildings and municipal facilities, transportation infrastructure and facilities.

The city has adopted community design guidelines for the city center to support a pedestrian-friendly environment and transit-oriented development. The element identifies the existing number of housing units in the center and includes broad goals and policies addressing housing in the center.

The plan includes provisions to ensure success of the center and transition into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly place that supports transit and accommodates growth. The city's approach to land use, transportation, and design are noteworthy, as well implementation actions the city has taken to advance transformation of the area. The city has established the City Center Redevelopment Fund and committed to pursue public-private partnerships to leverage redevelopment. The element includes detailed goals to provide a balanced transportation network that accommodates public transportation, high occupancy vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and integrated parking. The plan calls for the city to prioritize transportation investments in the center that support transit and pedestrian-oriented land use patterns and a smaller street grid with bicycle routes, sidewalks, and clearly identifiable transit routes. The City Center element devotes a section for transit, including high capacity transit, which describes transit service, as well as existing and potential future facilities and services. The element includes policies to manage parking through structured parking, redevelopment of large surface lots, as well as allowing on-street and shared parking. The City Center element also includes policies addressing complete streets and green streets.

The plan meets many of the existing expectations of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist; however, there are aspects that the subarea plan does not address or that could be strengthened in future updates. Environmental provisions outlined in the checklist are not yet addressed, and population and employment targets and mode-split goals have not yet been developed for the regional growth center.

Planning Challenges

As noted in its September 2010 presentation to the Growth Management Policy Board, the Federal Way center's issues include traffic congestion and an environment that isn't pedestrian friendly as two of its key challenges.

Federal Way has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of the center. Regulatory mechanisms include increased height for mixed-use buildings and allowing five-story wood frame construction. Incentives and investments include enabling Multifamily Tax Exemption and completing a SEPA Planned Action for a target area within the city center. The city has also focused on redevelopment, including acquisition of the former AMC Theater site for redevelopment as a catalyst project and using LIFT program funds for local infrastructure improvements in an area comprising most of the city center.