

Renton

Located at the southern end of Lake Washington, Renton is the fourth largest city in King County, with an estimated 90,927 residents in the year 2010. Incorporated in 1901, the city has experienced significant population gains in recent years, primarily due to several large annexations. The city has grown from a small, compact town between the Cedar and Green River Valleys to a large 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 includes two primary sections. The northern portion borders Lake Washington and emphasizes mixed use and regional employment, including the Boeing Company’s Renton Plant and The Landing. The Landing is a significant recent retail and residential development in the northern half of the center. The southern portion of the center includes the downtown core and adjacent residential area. The downtown core has seen investment in recent years, including the Renton Pavilion Event Center and Piazza Park, Transit Center and the IKEA Performing Arts Center.

Acreege, Density & Mix of Activity

Renton is a medium-sized regional growth center in terms of total gross acreage (606 acres) with a net developable acreage of 461 acres (76% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city overall, Renton contains 4 percent of the city’s land area, 3 percent of the population, 7 percent of the housing, and 25 percent of the employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Renton has a medium number of total activity units (16,587), with predominantly employment activity (81% jobs/19% residents) and moderately high density of activity (27.4 units per gross acre).

Urban Form

Renton’s average parcel size is 0.7 acres, which is smaller than the 1.1-acre average size for growth centers. The Renton center provides a moderately walkable pedestrian environment, with a nearly complete network of sidewalks (94% coverage) and fairly large blocks with a 6.8 acre average size.

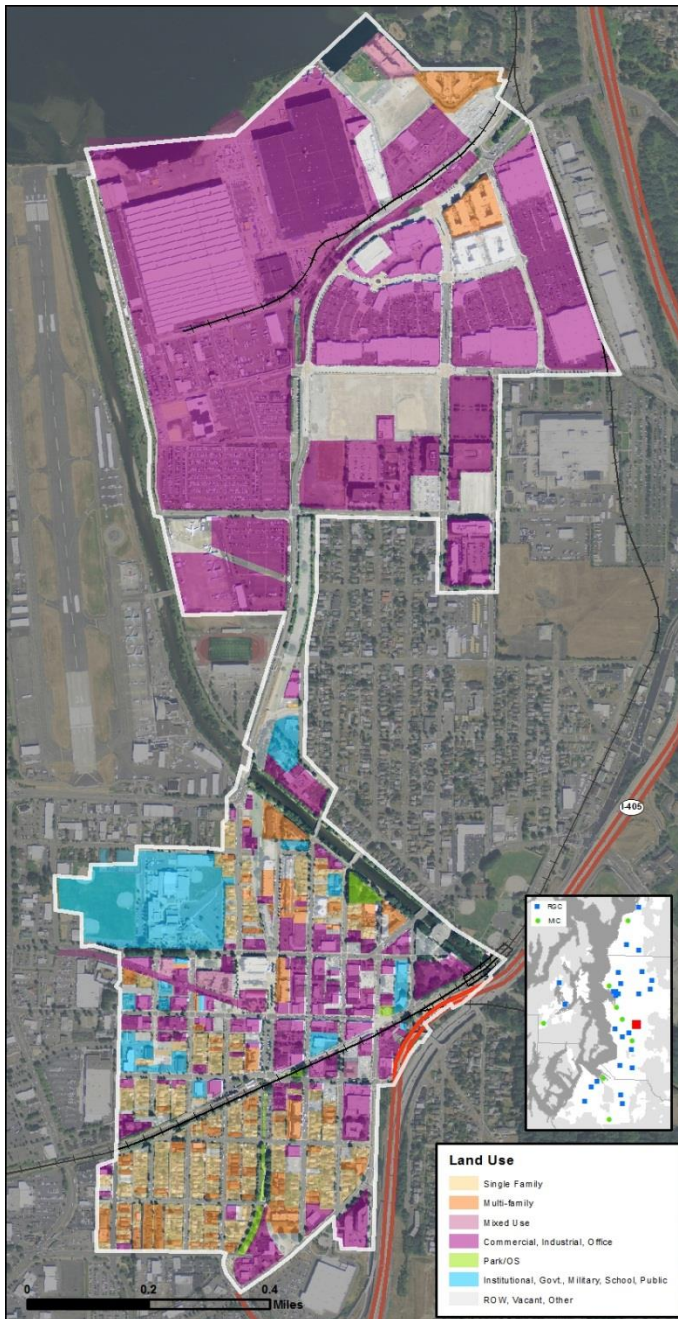
The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Renton’s center has a limited set of urban amenities (81 total amenities / 0.13 amenities per gross acre). Food/Drink (40%) and Public/Civic Services (27%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Restaurants and Healthcare.

2010 Summary Statistics

Land Use	
Gross acreage	606
Average block size (acres)	6.8
Average parcel size (acres)	0.7
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	.23 : 1
Population+Employee/acre	27.4
Population	
Total population	3,122
Population density/acre	5.2
Change (2000–2010)	1,292
Housing	
Total housing units	2,617
Housing unit density/acre	4.3
Change (2000–2010)	1,541
Employment	
Total employment	13,465
Employment density/acre	22.2
Change (2000–2010)	3,680
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	82%
Employee access to transit	50%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	79% + 9%
Walk & Bike / Transit	4% + 9%

Urban Amenities

Food & Drink	
Restaurants	20
Grocery	-
Cafes & Bars	8
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	1
Laundry & Haircuts	6
Home supplies	4
Clothing & Shoes	4
Banks	7
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	5
Electronics & Toys	-
Bookstores & Libraries	-
Arts & Culture	1
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	4
Schools & Childcare	3
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	3
Pharmacy	-
Healthcare	12
Residential Care Centers	2



Land Use

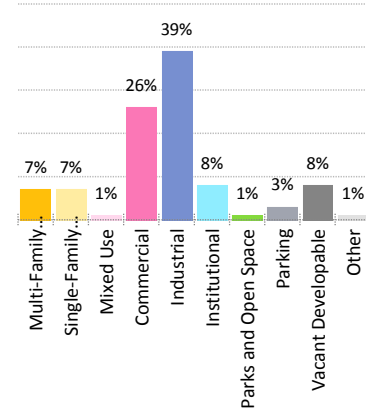
The major land uses in the Renton center are industrial (39%) and commercial (26%). About 74 percent of the center’s 461 net acres are in employment-related use, including mixed-use buildings. Approximately 14 percent of the land in the center are exclusively residential uses.

Demographics

The total population in the Renton regional growth center is 3,122, and grew by 1,292 residents from 2000 to 2010. The center has older residents than the region as a whole, with a moderate share of youth

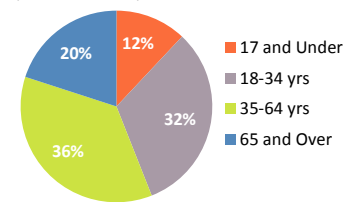
Current Land Use

(461 net acres)



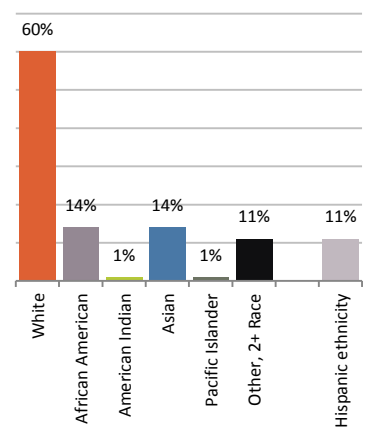
Age of Residents

(3,122 residents)



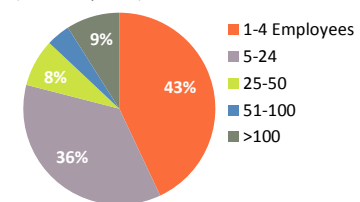
Racial/Ethnic Composition

(3,122 residents)



Size of Businesses

(241 workplaces)



(12%) and among the highest shares of seniors (20%). The age of residents is predominantly 35-64, followed by 18-34 (68% for both age groups combined). At 40 percent, Renton's racial diversity is greater than the region's 27 percent share of non-white residents. The groups with the highest shares in Renton are White (60%), Asian (14%), African American/Black (14%) and Other (11%). Eleven percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

Employment

The total employment in the Renton center is 13,465, and has decreased by 3,680 jobs over the past 10 years. The largest share of jobs is Other/Suppressed (72%).

Housing

The Renton regional growth center has 2,617 total housing units, with a density of 4.3 housing units per gross acre. Over the past 10 years, housing has grown by an impressive 1,541 units (143% increase). Based on Census Block Group data, Renton has a significant share (40%) of single family and 2- to 4- unit multifamily dwellings and a large share of units in 5- to 19- and 20+ unit multifamily (60%). In terms of unit affordability, Renton's owner-occupied housing tends to be significantly less expensive than the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center's share of units under \$300,000 category is 62 percent, whereas the region's share is 38 percent. The center's share of units over \$500,000 is 9 percent, whereas the region's is 25 percent.

Transportation

For work-based trips, the Renton regional center's travel characteristics are comparable 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 22 percent, with 9 percent in transit and 4 percent in walk/bike. The total daily trips from the Renton center are moderately focused on destinations in regional centers (24% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (10%) and trips that go to other centers (14%).

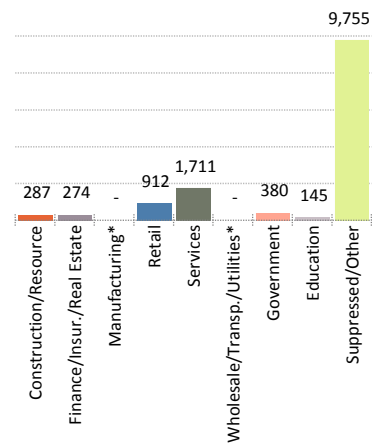
In terms of employee access to transit, Renton has limited access, with 50 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk to a transit stop. For the 1/2 mile walkshed, the center has moderate levels of employee access to transit (71%). For residential, Renton has good access, with 82 percent of housing units within a 1/4 mile walk. For the 1/2 mile walkshed, the center has complete levels of residential access to transit (100%).

Plan Overview

Renton adopted its *City Center Community Plan* in June 2011. The *City Center Plan* is a stand-alone subarea plan that divides the city center into five geographic areas: the Regional Employment Center, the Regional Retail Cluster, Downtown, Single-Family Residential Neighborhoods, and the North Mixed-Use Area. The introduction states that the subarea plan "is intended to help shape and direct that growth in a way that reflects the vision and desires of the people who live, work, learn, and play in the city center, while acknowledging the role the city center plays in the city as a whole, as well as the entire region."

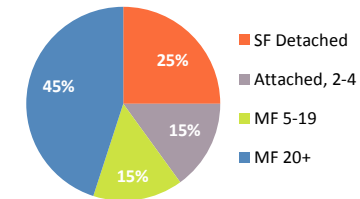
Jobs by Sector

(13,465 jobs)



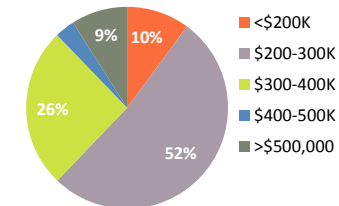
Housing Units by Type

(3,546 units)

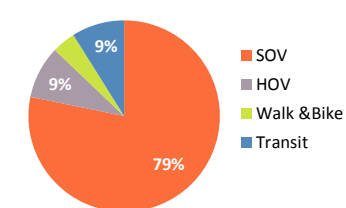


Value of Owner-Occupied Units

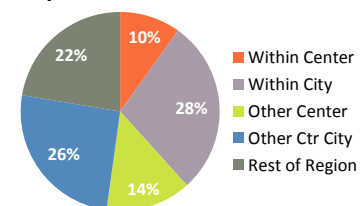
(742 units)



Mode Shares



Trip Destinations



The subarea plan includes sections covering public outreach and participation for the development of the plan, as well as sections addressing the vision and land use and population characteristics. A chapter of the subarea plan includes goals and policies addressing: (1) economic and community development, (2) transportation, and (3) parks, open space, and recreation for the city center. Each of these topics is supplemented with a defined implementation strategy, which identifies the party responsible, resources needed, public involvement necessary, and timeframe for completion. Also included in the plan is an Action Strategy table that condenses the implementation strategies to help track the progress of this community plan.

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 a most aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. Chapter 3, "Vision," provides a clear description of the city center in 2030 as "cohesive, identifiable urban centers where people live, work, learn, play, and visit..." The land use section provides a great discussion of the relationship between regional planning for regional growth centers, the King County countywide planning policies, and the city's comprehensive plan. The Land Use element includes information on the existing land use within the city center, including existing use, number of parcels, and total acreage. The plan also makes the connection between implementing the city's Urban Forestry Plan, and describes that this work will to increase canopy cover, improve streetscapes with street trees, and help to improve air quality and mitigate the effects of greenhouse gas emissions.

The plan addresses many of the existing expectations of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist; though, there are aspects that the subarea plan does not address or that could be strengthened in future updates. While economic development is addressed in the subarea plan, a stronger connection could be made to the region's industry clusters located within the center, such as aerospace. A stronger emphasis on the natural environment could also be incorporated in the subarea plan. This could include a discussion or reference to critical area maps and provisions the city has adopted for these. Housing could also be further addressed in the plan, or references could be made to the city's center-related housing policies in the comprehensive plan to provide more clarity regarding the housing strategy. Additional detail could be added for transportation-related strategies to meet the city's goal of developing an integrated, multimodal transportation system. This includes both the adoption of mode-split goals for the center and tailoring of level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions for the center to encourage transit. Finally, the subarea plan does not specifically deal with capital facilities and their financing, and provides more general direction, such as a call for the city to "determine necessary utilities and infrastructure to support the center."

Planning Challenges & Implementation Strategies

As noted by the city in its July 2011 presentation to the Growth Management Policy Board, as well as a 2011 survey, the Renton center's challenges include lack of market demand, fragmented parcel ownership, roads with outdated and potentially unsafe designs, and lack of bicycle facilities. The city identified planning challenges such as lower-density new development, costs of aging infrastructure, compromises to design standards and dispersed development.

Renton has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of its center. Regulatory mechanisms include zoning for significant densities (100 – 250 du/acre), minimum densities, and density bonuses in some areas for provision of affordable housing. Incentives and investments include fee waivers, enabling Multifamily Tax Exemption, and a Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement for a significant portion of the center. This city has also developed parking garages in the center and made roadway infrastructure improvements.