

# Seattle Northgate

Founded in 1869, the City of 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. With a 2010 population of more than 608,000, the city is the region's largest and most diverse in terms of population, economic activity, and transportation options. The city has designated six regional growth centers—Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Northgate, South Lake Union, Uptown Queen Anne, and the University Community—to accept significant planned population and employment growth.

Since the completion of I-5 in 1965, the Northgate area has become gradually more commercially dense, with a variety of new retail and medical/dental structures infilling central properties, plus gradual additions of multifamily housing over the last 25 years. There is currently an increasing trend of mixed-use infill development. The center's major attractions include the Northgate Mall and Northwest Hospital, one of the city's few hospital complexes outside of central Seattle, and single-family residential neighborhoods surround the commercial core area on all sides. North Seattle Community College is just outside the center's southwestern boundary. 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. The center also has one park-and-ride lot and a transit center located south of the mall. The center is bisected by I-5, which serves as the western edge of the center's commercial core.

## Acres, Density & Mix of Activity

Seattle Northgate is a smaller regional growth center in terms of total gross acreage (409 acres) with a net developable acreage of 295 acres (72% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city overall, Seattle Northgate contains 1 percent of the city's land area, 1 percent of the population, 2 percent of the housing, and 3 percent of the employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Seattle Northgate has a medium number of total activity units (18,480), with employment-oriented activity (62% jobs/38% residents) and a fairly high density of activity (45.2 units per gross acre).

## Urban Form

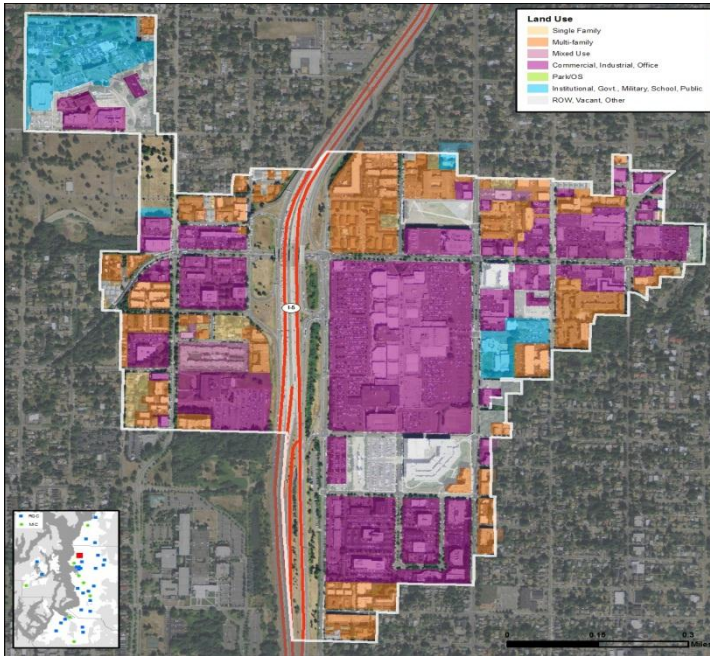
Seattle Northgate's average parcel size is 0.9, which is similar to the 1.1-acre average size for growth centers. Seattle Northgate provides a moderately walkable pedestrian environment, with a complete network of sidewalks (99% coverage) but large blocks at a 9.6-acre average size. The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form. Seattle Northgate has a moderate set of urban amenities (253 total amenities / 0.62 amenities per gross acre). Public/Civic Services (49%) and Home (25%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Healthcare, Clothing/Shoes and Restaurants.

## 2010 Summary Statistics

Land Use	
Gross acreage	409
Average block size (acres)	9.6
Average parcel size (acres)	0.9
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	.62 : 1
Population+Employee/acre	45.2
Population	
Total population	7,049
Population density/acre	17.2
Change (2000–2010)	740
Housing	
Total housing units	4,569
Housing unit density/acre	11.2
Change (2000–2010)	828
Employment	
Total employment	11,431
Employment density/acre	27.9
Change (2000–2010)	425
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	95%
Employee access to transit	100%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	72% • 9%
Walk & Bike / Transit	4% • 14%

## Urban Amenities

Food & Drink	
Restaurants	32
Grocery	3
Cafes & Bars	12
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	-
Laundry & Haircuts	9
Home supplies	10
Clothing & Shoes	35
Banks	12
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	3
Electronics & Toys	4
Bookstores & Libraries	2
Arts & Culture	2
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	8
Schools & Childcare	3
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	-
Pharmacy	2
Healthcare	112
Residential Care Centers	4



**Land Use**

The major land uses in Seattle Northgate are commercial (50%) and multi-family residential (23%), with emphases in retail and medical/dental services. About 60 percent of the center’s 295 net acres are in employment-related use, including mixed-use buildings. Approximately 25 percent of the land in the center are exclusively residential uses.

**Demographics**

The total population in Seattle Northgate is 7,049, and has grown by 740 residents over the past 10 years. The center has a similar age profile as the region as a whole, with a moderate share of youth (13%) and a moderate share of seniors (15%). The age of residents is predominantly 18-34, followed by 35-64 (72% for both age groups combined). At 44 percent, Seattle Northgate's racial diversity is greater than the region's 27 percent share of non-white residents. The groups with the highest shares in Seattle Northgate are White (56%), Asian (20%), African American/Black (11%) and Other (11%). Ten percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

**Employment**

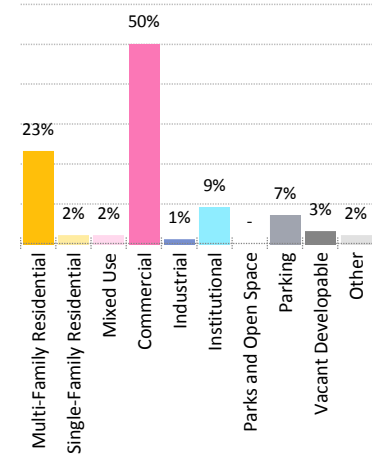
The total employment in Seattle Northgate is 11,431, increasing by 425 jobs over the past 10 years. The major industry sectors are Retail (20%) and Services (68%). Much of the employment in Northgate is located at the major retail facilities, Northwest Hospital, along with a general mix of small-business offices.

**Housing**

Seattle Northgate has 4,569 total housing units, with a density of 11.2 housing units per gross acre. Over the past 10 years, housing has grown by 828 units (22% increase). Based on Census Block Group data, Seattle Northgate has a large share (35%) of single family and 2- to 4- unit multifamily dwellings and a significant share of 5- to 19- and 20+ unit

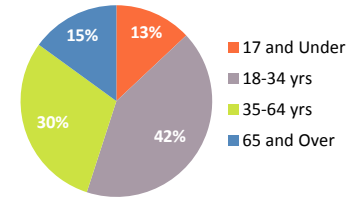
**Current Land Use**

(295 net acres)



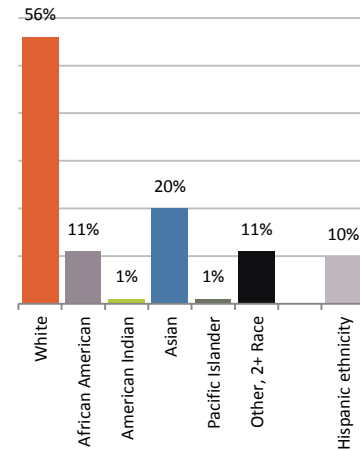
**Age of Residents**

(7,049 residents)



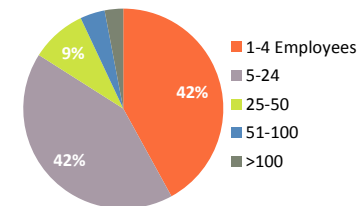
**Racial/Ethnic Composition**

(7,049 residents)



**Size of Businesses**

(523 workplaces)



multifamily (64%). In terms of unit affordability, Seattle Northgate's owner-occupied housing tends to be less expensive than the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center's share of units under \$300,000 is 46 percent, whereas the region's share is 38 percent. The center's share of units over \$500,000 category is 10 percent, whereas the region's is 25 percent.

### Transportation

For work-based trips, the Seattle Northgate regional center's travel characteristics are somewhat different from the region as a whole, with fewer single-occupant vehicle (SOV) and slightly more transit trips. The region's SOV share is 76 percent, while the center's share is 72 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 27 percent, with 14 percent in transit and 4 percent in walk/bike. The total daily trips from Seattle Northgate 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 (13%).

In terms of employee access to transit, Seattle Northgate has complete access, with 100 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk to a transit stop. For residential, Seattle Northgate has nearly complete access, with 95 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

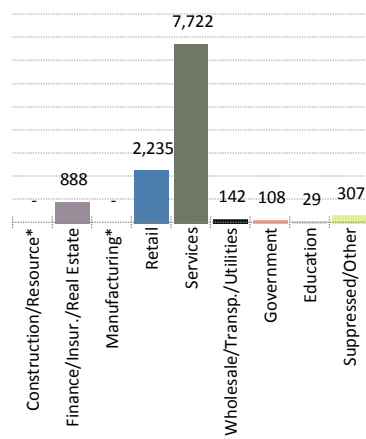
Seattle addresses the Northgate center in a section of the Neighborhood element of its comprehensive plan. Policies included in the element are based on the neighborhood plan completed in 1993. Through its neighborhood planning process, Seattle has developed neighborhood plans for each of its regional growth centers. Though the plans were recognized as the vision and goals of neighborhoods, only the subset of policies adopted in the Neighborhood element of its comprehensive plan are considered adopted city policy.

### 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. Both the Urban Village element and the relevant section of the Neighborhood element were reviewed for this analysis. 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.

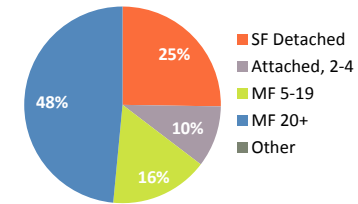
### Jobs by Sector

(11,431 jobs)



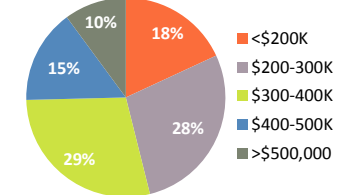
### Housing Units by Type

(5,973 units)

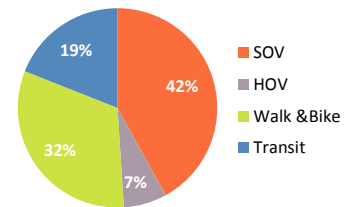


### Value of Owner-Occupied

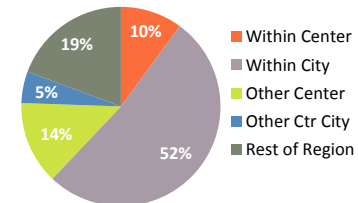
Units (1,790 units)



### Mode Shares



### Trip Destinations



Seattle has a framework in place to guide development in the city's multiple center types. Goals and policies established in the Urban Village element in Seattle's comprehensive plan are applicable to all six of Seattle's regional growth centers. Urban Village policies address a number of aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. The element describes the centers in a regional context. Policies call for compact mixed-use places and transportation improvements to support walking, transit and demand management. The element calls for directing compact growth in centers and accommodating a range of economic activity. Policies focus on directing new investments in infrastructure and services to areas expected to receive additional growth and providing housing choices, accessible open space and employment opportunities. Urban centers are characterized by the presence of public facilities and human services; parks, open spaces, street designs and recreational facilities; and neighborhood design guidelines. Mode split goals, employment and residential growth targets, and a description of capital facilities for each regional growth center are described elsewhere in the comprehensive plan.

The Neighborhood element – Northgate section addresses many aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist. A general vision for the center is provided through the goal statements. The element includes policies emphasizing usable open space. Several of the Transportation 2040 Physical Design Guidelines are addressed. For example, the element states that “high density residential and employment uses are concentrated within a 10-minute walk of the transit center.” Supportive policies are included that address developing an integrated multimodal transportation network and managing parking in the center.

The plan meets many of the existing expectations of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist, though there are aspects that the plan does not address or that could be strengthened in future updates. A stronger emphasis on the environment could be incorporated in the plan, including policies addressing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Though the plan includes a general policy about housing, and additional detail could be provided on implementation strategies. The plan does not yet include a market analysis of the center's development potential. Given the element's policy focus, it provides a limited amount of information on the existing conditions, including industry clusters in the center and the mix, distribution, and location of existing uses.

#### **Planning Challenges & Implementation Strategies**

As noted by the city in its May 2009 presentation to the Growth Management Policy Board, as well as a 2011 survey, the Seattle Northgate center's issues an established super block platting, excess of surface parking, a freeway bisecting the neighborhood, and maintaining housing affordability.

Seattle has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of its centers. These include incentive zoning, ongoing zoning amendments to increase development capacities, no minimum parking requirements, flexibility in mixing of uses, and transit oriented communities planning.