

Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on the Scope of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)

Proponent: City of Tukwila

Project Name: Southcenter Subarea Plan, Revised TMC Chapter 18.28 TUC, and Southcenter Design Manual

Location of Proposal: Tukwila's urban center, *Southcenter*, is an approximate 1,000-acre area that is generally bounded by I-5/Southcenter Parkway (and the toe of the west valley wall) on the west, I-405 on the north, the City limits and the Green River on the east, and S. 180th Street and the Green River on the south. See *Figure 1 Southcenter Area Districts* below.

Lead Agency: The City of Tukwila is the lead agency for compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Description of the Proposal: The proposed project includes adoption of a subarea plan for Tukwila's designated urban center – the Southcenter area – which will become an optional element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed project also includes the revised TMC Chapter 18.28, and the Southcenter Design Manual. The non-project SEIS will be prepared consistent with RCW 43.21C.420 and will evaluate the probable adverse environmental impacts associated the subarea plan and alternatives. The SEIS will also identify measures that will be used to mitigate identified impacts.

Specifically, the SEIS will analyze the impacts associated with future development and redevelopment in the Southcenter area, the area currently zoned "TUC" (Tukwila Urban Center). Future development may include redevelopment of aging structures or infill on underutilized parcels that could occur over approximately the next 20 years, as well as potential increases in employment and population that are being planned for in this area. Preliminary growth targets for the area include 15,500 new jobs and 4,800 additional households by 2031. To help achieve the City's economic development objectives, a goal of the SEIS is to eliminate the need for additional environmental analysis in conjunction with development and redevelopment that occurs on individual sites within the Southcenter area. This environmental review is intended to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and as an incentive for property owners and developers to favorably consider Tukwila's urban center when locating a business or investing in the community. For more information about the proposed project go to: <http://www.tukwilawa.gov/dcd/urbancenterplan.html>

Background/Prior Environmental Review: The City of Tukwila will prepare a non-project supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the Proposed Action. The non-project

SEIS will rely on adopted plans and regulations and prior environmental documents. The City reviewed existing environmental documents, plans and development regulations to help determine the type and scope of environmental document that would be appropriate for the Southcenter Subarea Plan and related actions. It reviewed the extensive documentation that has been developed in connection with SEPA compliance for prior City planning actions, and for project proposals. It also reviewed its adopted development regulations and adopted City utility plans.

Based on this review, the City determined that almost all probable significant adverse environmental impacts associated with adoption of the Southcenter Subarea Plan have been disclosed and evaluated in previous environmental documents, would be mitigated by adopted development regulations, and/or are addressed in adopted City plans. The key changes and impacts that are likely to occur as the urban center redevelops are related to transportation and land use. Although these impacts have been anticipated and discussed previously, the City determined that supplemental information and analysis of these issues, in the form of a Supplemental EIS (SEIS) would help agencies, tribes, the public and elected officials understand the environmental implications of the subarea plan, would further the City's goal of encouraging appropriate development within the urban center, and would meet the requirements SEPA.

Completing a non-project SEIS presents a cumulative impact analysis for the entire subarea, rather than piecemeal analysis of the environmental impacts and mitigation on a project-by-project basis. As a result, the environmental impacts and mitigation are comprehensively evaluated at the subarea-wide level. Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.420, a non-project SEIS for a subarea plan can also eliminate the need for subsequent environmental review associated with project-specific development proposals that are consistent with the subarea's development regulations. As such, the non-project SEIS provides certainty and predictability for urban development proposals; thereby streamlining the environmental review process within the subarea and encouraging the goals of SEPA and the State's Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW).

Under RCW 43.21C.420, cities with a population greater than 5,000 that adopt optional elements of their comprehensive plans and optional development regulations that apply within areas designated as urban centers in a land use or transportation plan adopted by a regional transportation planning organization, may prepare a nonproject environmental impact statement assessing and disclosing the probable significant adverse environmental impacts of the optional comprehensive plan element and development regulations, and of future development that is consistent with the plan and regulations. Tukwila is designated as a regional growth center in VISION 2040 by PSRC, and as an urban center in the King County Countywide Planning Policies

If a proposed development is inconsistent with the subarea plan and development regulations, the City will require additional environmental review.

For a non-project SEIS completed under RCW 43.21C.420, the SEPA-based appeal opportunity occurs only in conjunction with issuance of the non-project Final SEIS. Consistent with RCW 43.21C.420, a proposed development will not be subject to project-specific SEPA-based administrative or judicial appeals if the proposed development is (1) proposed within 10 years of the issuance of the subarea Final SEIS, (2) situated within the subarea, and (3) consistent with the adopted subarea plan and development regulations. Similarly, there are no SEPA noticing requirements for subsequent site-specific development or redevelopment within the subarea that is consistent with the subarea plan.

Alternatives: The SEIS will analyze several alternatives as part of the Southcenter Plan. The *No-Action Alternative*, which is required in an EIS, assumes that the Southcenter Subarea Plan and any implementing regulations would not be adopted. Existing regulations, design guidelines and design review thresholds would apply. Any development or redevelopment proposed within the urban center in conjunction with the No-Action Alternative would undergo environmental review on a project-by-project basis. Such projects would be subject to site-specific mitigation and potential SEPA-based appeals. They would not be part of the non-project SEIS process.

The SEIS will also analyze environmental impacts of the *High Intensity Urban Center Alternative*. This alternative implements the vision for the Southcenter area and accommodates the same amount of planned growth but would allow taller buildings than those allowed under the Proposed Action between the Mall and the Sounder Commuter Rail/Amtrak Station. It is assumed that the Southcenter Subarea Plan and other aspects of the implementing regulations would remain the same. This alternative would also use the process set forth in RCW 43.21C.420 and would not require subsequent project-specific environmental review.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Required: The City of Tukwila has determined that the Southcenter Subarea Plan, revised TMC Chapter 18.28, and the Southcenter Design Manual may have a significant adverse impact on the environment. A Supplemental EIS under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) will be prepared. This decision was made after a review of information that is on-file with the City of Tukwila. Preliminary indications are that the following elements of the environmental will be evaluated in this SEIS:

- Land Use
- Aesthetics
- Transportation
- Air Quality

SEIS Scoping: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of this proposed SEIS. You may comment on the alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, proposed mitigation measures, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Methods for presenting your comments are described below.

All comments are due no later than **5 p.m., Monday April 8, 2013.**

- **SEIS Public Scoping Meeting** – An SEIS scoping meeting is scheduled for **noon to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday March 20, 2013** at the **Albert Lee Appliance Store located at 404 Strander Boulevard, Tukwila, WA 98188**. The purpose of the meeting is to present information about the proposed project and to provide an opportunity to comment orally on the scope of the proposed SEIS. Written comments will also be accepted at this meeting (comment forms will be available).
- **Submittal of Written Comments via Mail** – Written comments may be submitted to the City of Tukwila SEPA Responsible Official (noted below):

Environmental Officer: Mr. Jack Pace
Title: Director, Dept. of Community Development
Address: City of Tukwila
Dept. of Community Development
6300 Southcenter Blvd, Suite 100
Tukwila, WA 98188
Phone # 206.431.3670
Fax # 206.431.3665
Date: 2/27/2013 Signature: 

- **Submittal of Written Comments via Email to the City** – Comments may be submitted by email to the City's Responsible Official (noted above) to: SouthcenterPlan@tukwilawa.gov

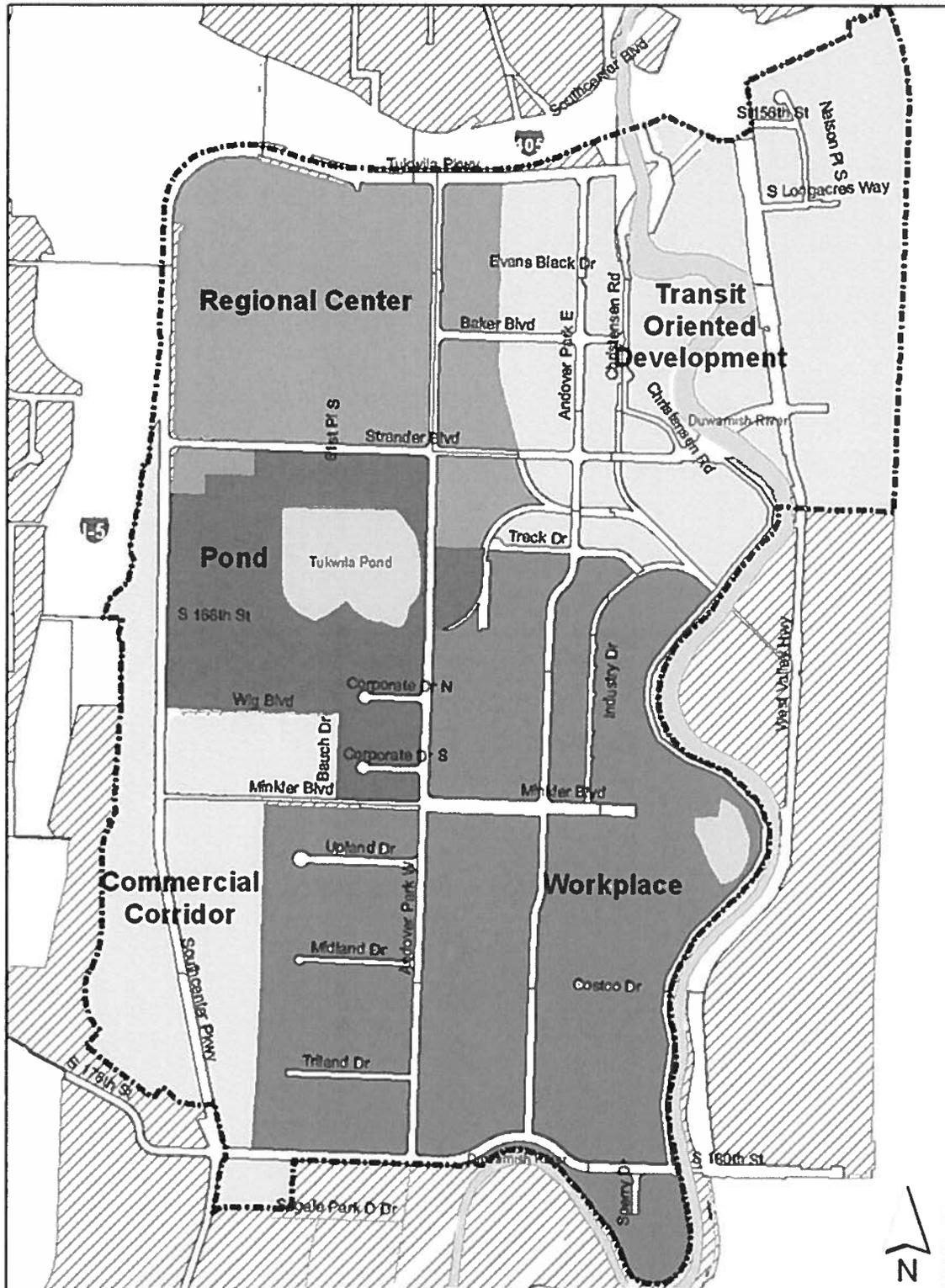


Figure 1. Southcenter Area Districts

