

Tukwila Urban Center Plan



CITY OF TUKWILA, WASHINGTON

**URBAN CENTER
SUBAREA PLAN**

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

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LOOKING NORTH FROM THE INTERSECTION OF SOUTHCENTER PARKWAY AND SOUTH 180TH STREET CIRCA 1960

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i.1 PURPOSE

This *Subarea Plan* is established to orchestrate private and public investment activities in the Tukwila Urban Center (TUC). It presents the community's vision for the evolution and continued growth of the TUC. The Subarea Plan establishes the primary means of regulating land use and development on properties located within the Plan Area. It also establishes the primary means of planning City actions and investments in support of the growth and continued evolution of the TUC.

i.2 PLAN AREA

The *Plan Area* refers to all private and public properties that come under the purview of the *Tukwila Urban Center Subarea Plan* as indicated in Fig.i.1.Plan Area Map, The Plan Area consists of approximately 1000 acres located in the southeastern corner of the City of Tukwila. The Plan Area is bounded by Interstate-405 to the north, Interstate-5 to the west, includes South 180th St. and its enfronting properties to the south, and is bordered by the Green River and Tukwila's city limits to the east.

i.3 AUTHORITY

This Subarea Plan is adopted under the authority of RCW Section 36.70A.080 of the *Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA)*, which establishes Subarea Plans that are consistent with Comprehensive Plans as an authorized mechanism for regulating land use and development in the City. The GMA requires preparation of a 20-year comprehensive plan addressing land use, rural use (counties only), housing, capital facilities, utilities, and transportation elements. Optionally, a city or county may choose to include Subarea plans and/or other elements as a part of the comprehensive plan.

King County's Countywide Planning Policies define "urban centers" as areas of concentrated employment and housing, with direct service by high-capacity transit. They are to encompass a wide range of land uses, including retail, recreational, public facilities, parks, residential, and open space.

The *City of Tukwila Comprehensive Plan*, which was revised and updated in the fall of 2004, designates the Tukwila Urban Center as one of the region's Urban Centers, in order to direct its development towards a higher density, regionally oriented, mixed use center. This Subarea Plan is established in accordance with the policies contained in the *City of Tukwila Comprehensive Plan*. The regulations contained in Book II of this Subarea Plan are a part of the City of Tukwila Municipal Code.

i.4 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This *Tukwila Urban Center Subarea Plan* consists of three mutually supportive "Books" or primary sections, as follows:

Book I: Community Intent describes the envisioned physical outcomes that the Subarea Plan is intended to instigate and the primary means by which the community intends to support the emergence of those desired outcomes.

Book II: Development Regulations establishes the primary means of regulating land use and development on privately owned properties located within the Plan Area.

Book III: City Actions describes the planned investment of City resources to stimulate, promote and support the desired growth and change in the Plan Area.

In addition to these three primary sections, additional information upon which the Subarea Plan is founded is included both in the appendices of this document, as well as in separately bound technical reports.



THIS SUBAREA PLAN ESTABLISHES A PLANNING AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK TO FURTHER THE VITALITY, FUNCTIONALITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE TUKWILA URBAN CENTER (TUC)/SOUTHCENTER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FORCES OF THE FREE MARKET AND THE COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR ITS PRIMARY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT. BOOK I OF THE SUBAREA PLAN DESCRIBES THE COMMUNITY'S ASPIRATIONS FOR SOUTHCENTER, AND THE PHYSICAL OUTCOMES THAT THE PLAN IS INTENDED TO ORCHESTRATE AS NEW INVESTMENT CREATES CHANGE. THIS FIRST SECTION OF THE PLAN ALSO OUTLINES THE MEANS BY WHICH THE COMMUNITY INTENDS TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE REALIZATION OF THE VISION OF THE FUTURE SOUTHCENTER. FINALLY, BOOK I IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR ACTIONS NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED BY THE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OR CITY ACTIONS DETAILED IN THE SUBSEQUENT SECTIONS OF THIS SUBAREA PLAN.

1.1 INTENT

The Southcenter area serves many functions for the citizens of Tukwila. It is the city's primary commercial hub, drawing customers from within the community and all over the region. It is a workplace center, providing jobs to residents and nearby communities. And it is a major contributor, through property and sales tax, to local government and the services it provides to all citizens. It is the intention of the Tukwila community and the purpose of this Plan to bolster, extend and built upon these valuable functions, and to realign the Plan Area as needed with new forces of change and market demand. More specifically, it is the community's intention to:

- 1) Bolster Tukwila Urban Center's market position as the primary regional shopping center for South King County.
- 2) Establish a planning framework that insures that each new increment of new investment adds to the long term sustainability of Southcenter as a part of the city and region.
- 3) Encourage the eventual redevelopment of underutilized properties and oversized parking lots into a pattern that connects the project areas' key anchors and overlooked amenities to each other and to new infill commercial, residential and public spaces.
- 4) Substantially enhance the walkability of the northern Southcenter area, augmenting the exclusively auto-oriented environment with pedestrian amenities, transit and bicycle facilities.
- 5) Stimulate pioneering residential development in walking distance of the commuter rail station, and configured to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian routes to and from the station and other Southcenter destinations.
- 6) Enhance the convenience, visibility, accessibility and visual character of the transit infrastructure in Southcenter, and integrate that transit infrastructure with the pattern of development in the urban center.
- 7) Realign policies conditioning development in Southcenter with contemporary consumer and investor preferences.
- 8) "Unearth" Tukwila Pond and the portion of the Green River that passes through Southcenter, restoring, where necessary, their natural health and beauty, and featuring them prominently as amenities that enhance the identity and drawing power of Southcenter.
- 9) Restore the visual character of Southcenter to reflect the special landscape and architectural heritage of the Pacific Northwest region.

1.2 STARTING POINT: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The condition of the Plan Area at the inception of this Subarea Plan is detailed in Appendix A. Ultimately, the implementation of the planning framework contained herein will result in sufficient modification of these conditions as to make this Plan obsolete. At that point, a newly updated *Tukwila Urban Center Subarea Plan* will need to be prepared to engage the problems and opportunities presented by the modified existing conditions. As change occurs, the community intends to measure those changes against the conditions recorded herein to monitor the Plan's success and the degree to which it remains sufficiently current.

1.3 THE ENVISIONED FUTURE TUKWILA URBAN CENTER

The Tukwila Urban Center is composed of 244 individual privately held properties, and over 8 miles of public rights-of-way that are under the ownership and control of the City. The overarching purpose of the Subarea Plan is to orchestrate individual public and private investments to produce greater value than any separate project could practically achieve by providing a common purpose that all investors can rely upon, contribute to, and derive value from. This section describes the common purpose to which all investments shall be directed: the realization of a vision of the future that is sufficiently specific to provide a common purpose, yet loose enough to respond to opportunities and changes in the marketplace that will inevitably arise.

1) District Structure – From Sprawling Commercial Area to Urban Center

The northern portion of the Plan Area at the time of plan adoption exhibits the characteristics of the typical regional shopping center - a super-regional shopping mall surrounded by parking lots and by rings of associated smaller scale, single story, surface-parked commercial buildings. The southern portion of the Plan Area is primarily a warehouse and distribution center serving the mall and the region, featuring interspersed retail (especially furniture) outlets, along with some office buildings, primarily low-rise and surface parked. In addition, larger scale commercial centers and "big box" retailers have been increasingly dispersed in the central and southern portions of the Plan Area. The sprawling, entirely auto-oriented commercial zone is almost entirely built out; new investment will increasingly entail redevelopment.

The forces of market demand and land availability that produced these physical characteristics have evolved significantly in new directions. The primary driving forces conditioning the form of new investment in the Plan Area will be 1) the shopping industry's accelerating abandonment of exclusively auto-oriented shopping centers in favor of more open air and amenity-driven formats, 2) increasing regional commitment to transit, 3) rapidly growing demand for walkable urban environments for living, working and shopping, and 4) the escalating value of property in the Southcenter area as a result of the expansion of the regional mall and the disappearance of easily developed property in the area. The implementation of this Subarea Plan is intended to enable Southcenter to benefit from these primary conditioning forces.

Responding to these forces of change, the community envisions growth in Southcenter increasingly taking on a more compact and differentiated form, see Figure 1.1 Envisioned District Structure. The area centering on Westfield Southcenter Mall will continue its transformation to a more walkable and compact Regional Center extending southward toward Strander Boulevard ultimately extending to the edge of Tukwila Pond, and eastward across Andover Park West. In response to the region's enhanced commitment to transit service, a new Transit Oriented Neighborhood will extend from the relocated and upgraded transit center across Andover Park East. City improvements to water quality and pond amenities will help instigate the "unearthing" of Tukwila Pond not only as a public amenity, but as an "amenity anchor" for the southern edge of the Regional Center and as the center of a new mixed use Pond District. In addition, Southcenter Parkway will continue to feature auto-oriented retail and services, and the large center of the Plan Area will continue to provide a wide range of distribution, warehousing, and furniture outlets with incremental infill by office and other complementary commercial uses.

The particular characteristics envisioned for each of these districts and special corridors are specified in more detail in the following sections.

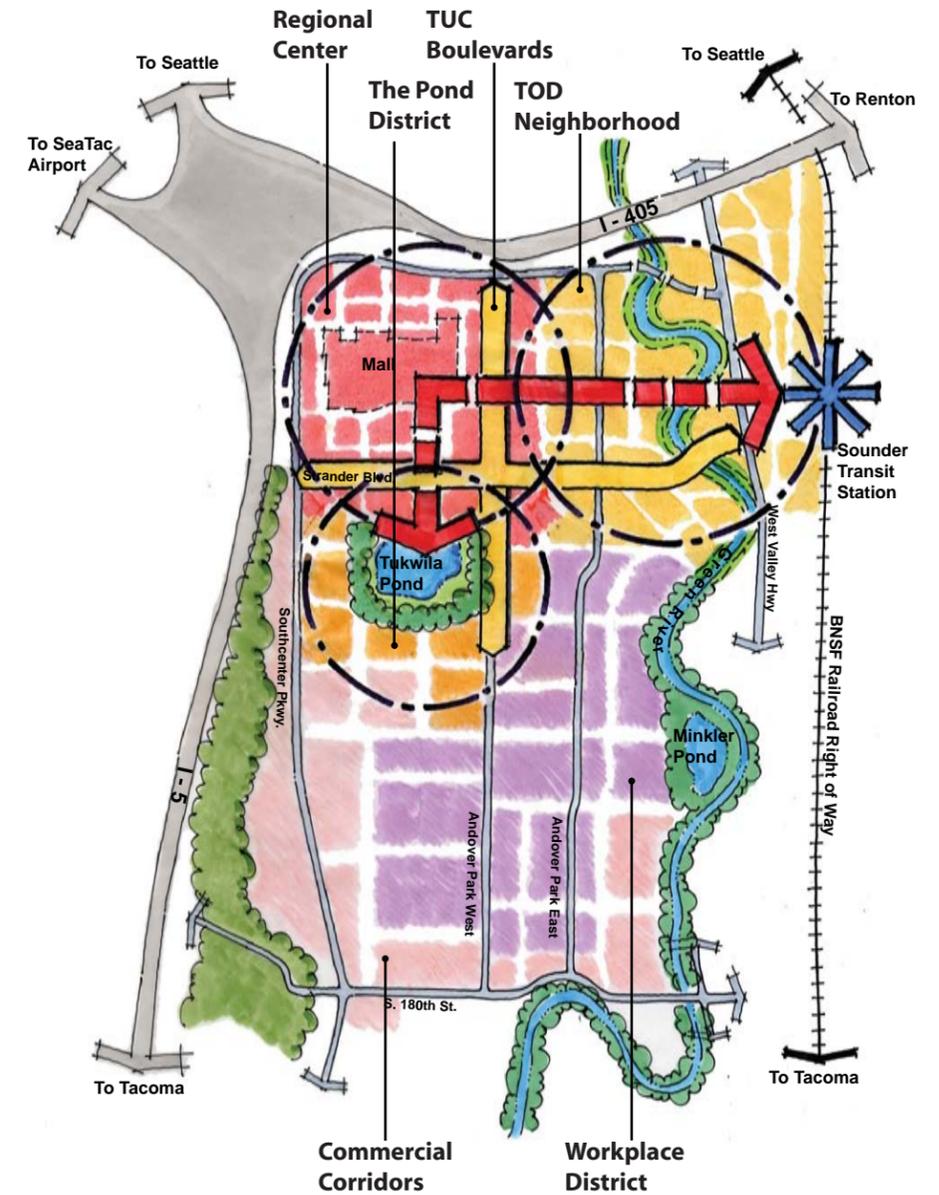


FIG.1.1 ENVISIONED DISTRICT STRUCTURE

The existing haphazard distribution of development types is restructuring into a pattern in which development types are organized by district structure. All districts are scaled to walking distance, and connected by a network of interlinked streets and primary public spaces.

The Regional Center

The Regional Center portion of the Subarea Plan is the primary shopping and entertainment destination for South King County, and the centerpiece of the Southcenter area. It occupies the highly visible and accessible northwestern quadrant of Southcenter, which is nestled snugly up against the intersection of Interstate 405 and Interstate 5. The Regional Center owes its success to and is anchored by the newly expanded and refurbished Westfield Southcenter Mall. The drawing power of this retail powerhouse will continue to bring investment in retail, services and entertainment venues oriented to an expanding regional trade.

As new investment continues to flow into the Plan Area, the community envisions the emergence of an increasingly urban district that uses its progressively more valuable land with greater efficiency, and that can be comfortably explored not only by automobile but also on foot or bicycle. The area surrounding the newly refurbished super-regional mall will begin changing from the exclusively parking-lot-surrounded, auto-dominated development that has begun to fall out of favor with market trends, in favor of an increasingly walkable and amenity driven pattern reflecting contemporary consumer and investor preferences.

New development will be increasingly characterized by a pattern of walkable-scaled city blocks with key street frontages lined with visible storefronts and active sidewalks (Photo 1). Buildings will be oriented to public spaces and sidewalk areas with higher levels of amenity (Photo 6). Abundant and convenient parking will be provided, but will no longer dominate the view from the road or the sidewalk.

As the Regional Center continues to grow in response to the growth of the region, and as property values escalate, the district will continue to intensify with upper stories containing offices (Photo 2), homes (Photos 3) or hotel rooms. Infill development on the high-value property of the Mall will continue the transition from surface parking to structured parking, and will likely be increasingly characterized by mid-rise or high-rise building components built over the retail base. This process of increasing land use efficiency, development intensity, synergy and mix, will be combined with increasing walkability and accessibility befitting a true regional center. The increased intensity and vitality will continue the process of broadening the Mall's draw, expanding its "captive audience," adding customers, residents, employees and safety to the dynamic center of the region.

In the long term, the mall at the center of the parking lot will continue to be the armature for continued escalation of value, activity and investment. The public spaces that are currently the hallways of the regional shopping mall will be extended again and again, providing the bustling, high amenity pedestrian spines that connect shopping anchors and shopfronts southward to the north shore of Tukwila Pond (ultimately an "amenity anchor") and eastward toward additional shops in the direction of the regional transit center (see Figure 1.2 Envisioned Long Term Growth and Change in the Regional Center). Ultimately, the current Mall's inward-focused development pattern will be reversed; its parking lots replaced entirely with the fine-grained and intensely developed patterns that characterize the most sought-after urban districts.



FIG. 1.2 ENVISIONED LONG TERM GROWTH AND CHANGE IN THE REGIONAL CENTER (TO BE UPDATED)



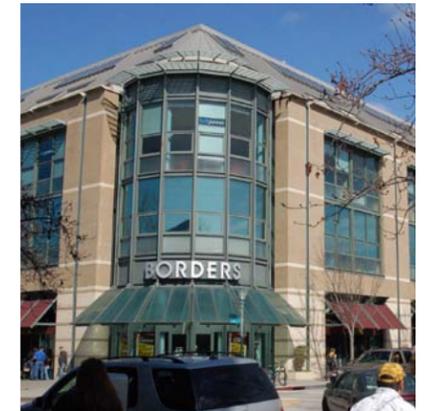
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PHOTOS 1-7. ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT TYPES IN THE REGIONAL CENTER DISTRICT

The Pond District

Southcenter's greatest amenity, Tukwila Pond, which prior development patterns has rendered virtually invisible, will become the prized center of an entirely new part of Southcenter (see Figure 1.3 Envisioned Change in the Pond District). Rather than turning its back on the Pond in the manner of development that occurred prior to the adoption of this Subarea Plan, new development will orient toward the pond, with active doors, windows, and public walkways facing the water. Surrounding streets and development will provide not only views to the water, but clear, legible and frequent connections to enhance public access to Tukwila Pond and its surrounding park.

Degradation of water quality and natural environment that occurred in the previous period in which the Pond became a forgotten amenity will be carefully reversed. The natural setting and wildlife amenities will be protected and proximity to and views of the Pond will add substantial value and character to nearby real estate development.

The Urban Waterfront

Along the northern edge of Tukwila Pond, development will take cues from its location adjacent to the Mall and to the retail corridor of Strander Boulevard, resulting in a more urban environment focused toward a paved waterfront esplanade (Photo 8 and 9. Envisioned Character of the Waterfront Esplanade). Over the long-term, the Mall may grow toward the Pond, making the northern shore function in part as an "amenity anchor" that broadens the appeal and offerings of the Regional Center and Southcenter as a whole. The waterfront esplanade will ultimately run all along the northern Pond shore, featuring restaurants and entertainment with storefronts spilling out onto the active pedestrian promenade along the waterfront, (see Figure 1.4 The Urban Waterfront Portion of the Pond District – Envisioned Character). The upper stories of the Pond's north shore development will likely feature homes, offices and/or hotel rooms (Photo 10) that benefit from the activities below, as well as from enviable views and access to the water, making it one of Southcenter's most coveted places to live, work, or visit.



**FIG.1.3 ENVISIONED CHANGE IN THE POND DISTRICT
(TO BE UPDATED)**



**PHOTOS 8-9. ENVISIONED CHARACTER OF THE
WATERFRONT ESPLANADE**



**PHOTO 10. ENVISIONED
DEVELOPMENT TYPES
ALONG THE NORTHERN
POND WATERFRONT**

The Natural Waterfront

The eastern, western, and southern edges of the pond will be characterized by a more natural park environment, offering a much more positive experience, and preserving habitat for pond wildlife. Pedestrian paths and sidewalks along the pond edge will provide benches, shade trees and informal landscaping. Buildings will be separated from the pond by streets along the eastern and southern edges and will not line the back of the pedestrian paths. Building heights will be lower along the southern edge to insure plenty of sunlight for the Pond itself; buildings will also step down toward the water, to preserve views as well as a park-like character. Ground floors will range from office, to support services, limited retail and lunch options for workers, to newer housing types like live-work on the ground floor, with more private uses like office and residential above.



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PHOTOS 11-13. ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT TYPES IN NATURAL WATERFRONT AREAS OF THE POND DISTRICT.

The TOD Neighborhood

As the region continues to embrace sustainable development and deepens its commitment to commuter rail transit, the northeastern quadrant of Southcenter will evolve in response to its relocated and improved transit center and in response to its potentially valuable riverfront. New transit oriented development (TOD) will leverage the transit station to bring new investment to the previously underutilized properties that have characterized much of the property in the northeastern-most portion of the Southcenter area. The emerging new transit-oriented district will be characterized by a compact and vibrant mix of housing, office, lodging and supportive retail and service uses. The district will benefit from its enviable location between the Regional Center and the railroad tracks, and from the potential amenity value of the segment of the Green River that runs through the district.

With the new Tukwila Sounder Transit Station moved to a more central location along the district's northeastern edge, the area within walking distance of the station will be well positioned to capture investment in dense housing and employment facilities. Local workers, commuters, shoppers, and residents will benefit from the easy access and convenience offered by the train and increasingly wide variety of transit offerings accessible at the Station.

A growing network of streets, public spaces and pedestrian connections will provide a fine-grained scale to the district, and connect it more readily to adjacent areas. A new pedestrian bridge across the Green River will provide a connection between station and the rest of Southcenter, and a new east-west pedestrian-oriented corridor along the Baker Boulevard alignment will complete the connection between the Regional Center and the station.

The overall structure of the TOD Neighborhood area will be characterized by higher development intensities and building heights close to the station, lower-rise buildings along the river, increasing again to higher development intensities and heights where the district overlaps with the edges of the Regional Center. This height and density gradient will result in the creation of three sub-areas within the TOD Neighborhood: the TOD Urban Neighborhood, the Riverfront, and the TOD Station Neighborhood.

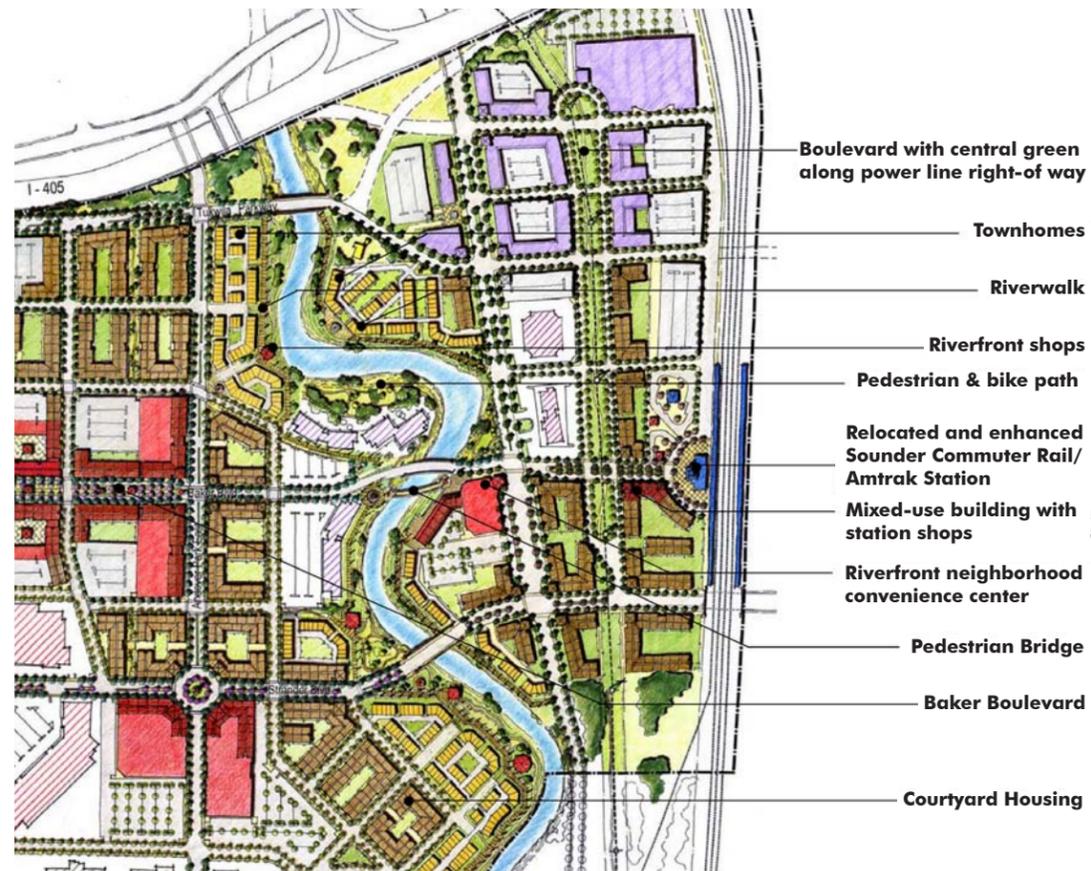


FIG.1.5 THE TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT ENVISIONED IN THE NEW TOD NEIGHBORHOOD



FIG.1.6 THE TOD NEIGHBORHOOD - ENVISIONED CHARACTER

TOD Urban Neighborhood

As change occurs between the river and the Mall, a TOD Urban Neighborhood will emerge as an intensely urbanized area with a mix of compatible uses spanning high-density residential (Photos 14,15,16), live-work, office (Photos 17,18) and lodging. Development will intermingle with the higher intensity areas to its west in the Regional Center. The Neighborhood's small, pedestrian-scaled blocks will be lined with a mix of retail, office and housing along active building frontages (Photos 20,22,23) to provide a pleasant pedestrian realm throughout the district, particularly along primary streets leading to the train station. New development will also contribute to the construction of new public open spaces within the district, widening the range of experiences on offer in this emerging urban neighborhood (Photo 19).



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PHOTOS 14-22. ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT TYPES IN THE TOD ACTIVE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

TOD Riverfront

Properties lining the segment of the Green River that cuts thru the TOD Neighborhood will take full advantage of their unique setting. New uses, including townhomes (Photo 24), mid-rise housing, offices, and hotels will be oriented toward river, and will add to an ultimately continuous riverfront esplanade paralleling the bike trail along the water's edge (Photo 23). The esplanade will be dotted with small kiosks and corner shops featuring riverwalk-oriented retail, such as snack bars, cafes and restaurants, or stores that provide water-themed recreational goods and services. The combination of river-fronting development and the expansion of public access to the water will begin to resuscitate this segment of the Green River and begin its renewal as one of the City's most precious recreational opportunities.



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PHOTOS 23-24. THE ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT TYPES IN THE TOD RIVERFRONT

TOD Station Neighborhood

East of the river, between West Valley Highway and the railroad tracks, many redevelopment obstacles are present at the time of Plan adoption. An existing rail spur from the Union Pacific Railroad renders much of the land in this neighborhood un-developable. An overhead high tension power line crosses the area. Finally, several underground and above-ground utilities present severe constraints to subterranean construction, which impacts the amount and intensity of possible development.

Rail consolidation will open up a significant portion of the land in this area to private development. The consolidation of the lines will free up larger assembled properties that will kick off a renaissance in this area in response to the upgraded transit facilities. The area will then move forward in a direction similar to the TOD Urban Neighborhood sub-area described above, with high-density lofts (Photo 25), mid-rise residential (Photo 30), offices (Photo 29) oriented toward the Transit Station (Photos 26,27). The right-of-way under the high tension power lines will become a wide avenue with a linear open space and refurbished white powerpoles in its broad green median.



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PHOTOS 25-31. THE ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT TYPES IN THE TOD STATION NEIGHBORHOOD

The Workplace District

Much of the southern portion of the Plan Area has been and will continue to be devoted to warehousing and distribution uses, many having located there for proximity to the state's largest super-regional shopping mall. The Workplace District also will continue to grow its retail niche of larger-scale goods, and especially to deepen its wide range of furniture outlets. Higher intensity workplaces like low-rise office will bring new workers to the area (Photo 32).

As development and intensification proceeds, policies for new investment will insure the emergence of an increasingly fine-grained network of interconnected streets. New development will provide new street connections to add capacity to accommodate internal district trips in lieu of the larger through-district arterials. As new investment proceeds, primary corridors such as Andover Park West and Andover Park East will increasingly emerge as the "front door" areas of the district, with perpendicular streets more typically accommodating service functions of parking and truck bay access.

Special Corridors

The emerging structure of distinguishable districts - the Regional Center, the Pond District, the TOD Neighborhood and the Workplace District - as the primary organizing elements of Southcenter will be complemented by the connecting arterials that span the length and width of the large urban center precinct. Two very different types of urban center-wide arterials will emerge, as follows:

TUC Boulevards

As the old pattern of congestion-prone superblocks transitions to a pattern of smaller blocks that distribute traffic along an increasing amount of street surface and alternative routes, a finer-grained hierarchy of different street-types will emerge from the previously undifferentiated network. The most heavily used and visible of Southcenter's streets will be the wide district-crossing thoroughfares. Making the most of that visibility, two of the thoroughfares are intended to become the "front doors" of the urban center, providing pedestrian amenities and enfronting development that contribute powerfully to the form and character of Southcenter. First, Strander Boulevard will continue to be the most well-traveled east-west thoroughfare and the gateway for many visitor to the Regional Center, Pond District and TOD Neighborhood. Of the several north-south arterials, Andover Park West provides the most direct connection to and through the Regional Center and the new Pond District. New development along these two "TUC Boulevards" will be oriented toward the public right-of-way, and will provide wider sidewalks, generous planting strips and decorative boulevard-scale furniture (Photo 33). High vehicular capacity and comfortable walking environments will coexist in a framework of grand-scaled public street spaces that are spatially defined by sufficiently tall buildings and properly detailed building facades.

Commercial Corridors

In order to insure that Southcenter provides opportunities for the full range of shopping industry development types, Southcenter Parkway will likely continue to service as Southcenter's commercial strip, providing sites for auto-oriented retail and services. To insure a sufficient number of opportunities to satisfy market demand for the types of auto-oriented venues that are inappropriate in the Regional Center, Pond District or TOD Neighborhood, 180th Street will also be designated as a potential location for stand-alone and auto-oriented formats, especially large-scale "big box," single tenant uses, as well as for uses requiring drive-up and drive-in facilities. As new development occurs, new improvements will provide modest new pedestrian amenities as well as beautification with indigenous landscaping.



PHOTO 32. ENVISIONED CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE DISTRICT

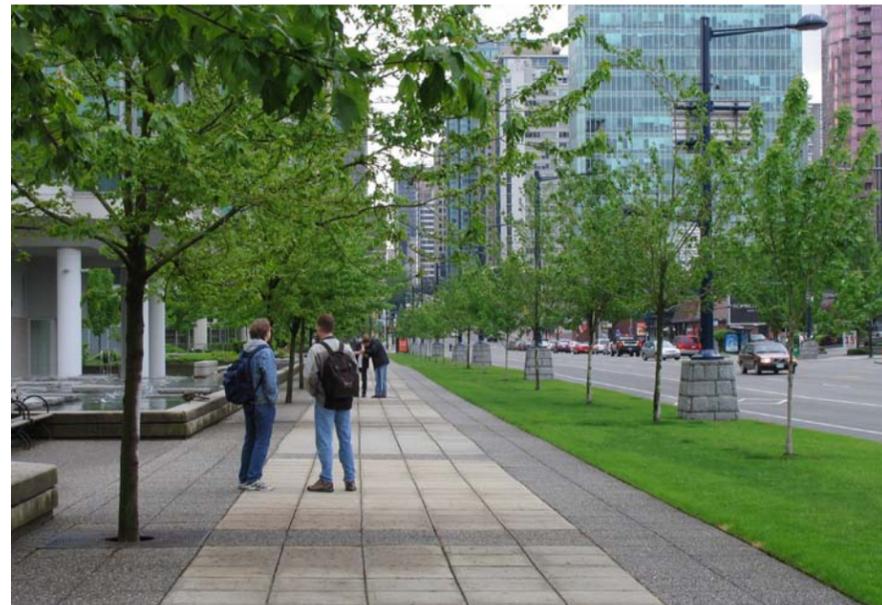


PHOTO 33. ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT TYPE FOR THE TUC BOULEVARD



PHOTO 34. ENVISIONED DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

2) Street Network – From Superblocks to A Fine-Grained Pattern of Streets and Blocks

The evolution of the sprawling commercial center into an urban center will be facilitated by the maturation of its street and block structure. As new more efficient development types replace the previous ones, an increasingly fine-grained network of new streets and smaller blocks will emerge to accommodate intensification of the Southcenter area (See Figures 1.7 and 1.8). As development occurs, new streets will relieve the pressure on the limited existing arterials now handling all the vehicular circulation, by increasing access to development while distributing the traffic in Southcenter across a number of routes. In the northern Southcenter area – the Regional Center, TOD Neighborhood and Pond District, smaller block sizes will make walking and bicycling a much more viable alternative while providing choices other than the wide arterial thoroughfares.

Streets will be designed to support the uses they serve. Along shopping streets, on-street parking, widened sidewalks and pedestrian amenities like streetlights, benches and seating, and special paving will support street-fronting retail. At neighborhood areas, narrower streets with pleasant, tree-lined sidewalks will provide the right environment for residences. In addition, the private development that lines these streets will feature building frontages that match the street type, with appropriate orientation, setbacks and entrances, and ensure that non-active frontages, like parking lots, are located in the right places.



FIG.1.7 EXISTING STREET NETWORK

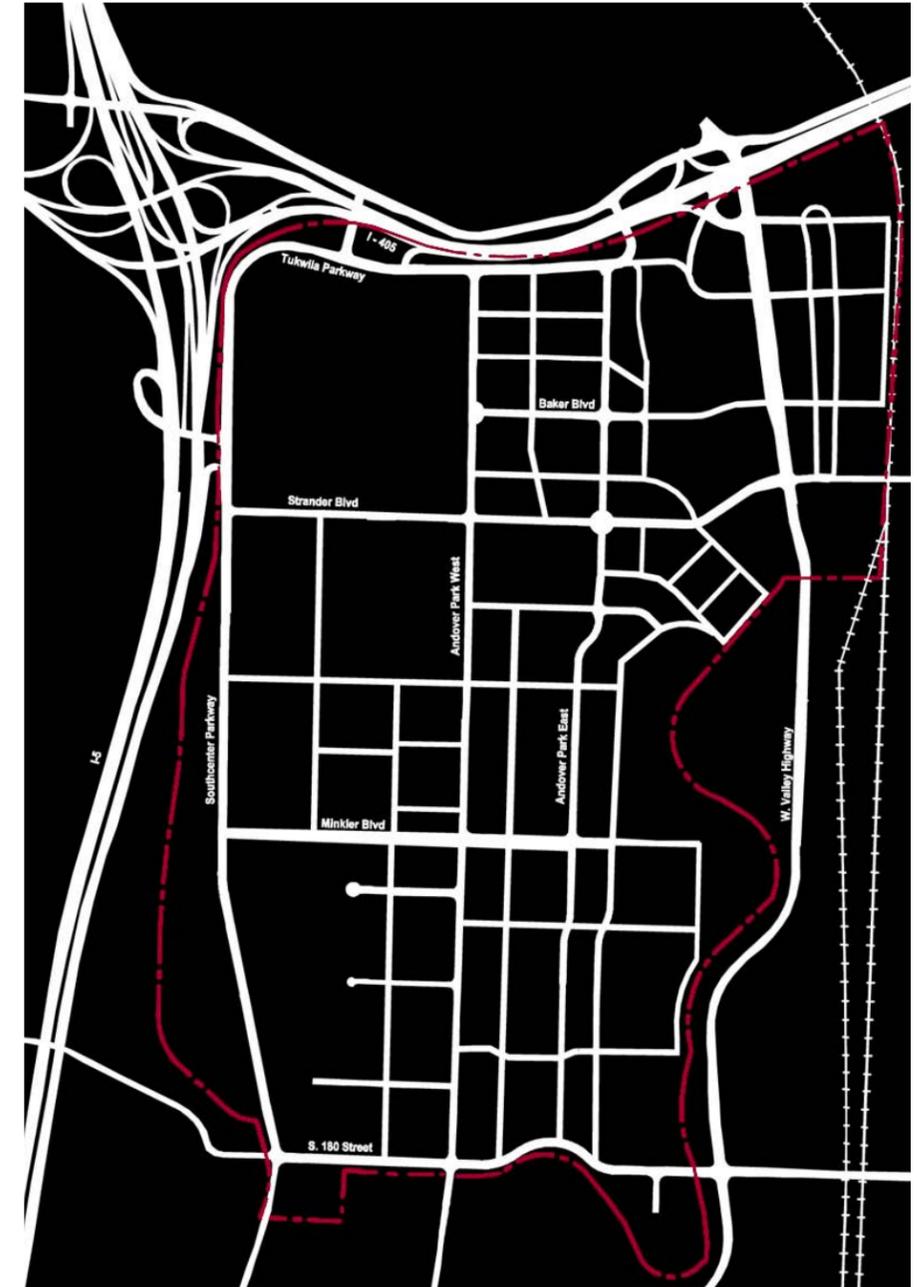


FIG.1.8 PROPOSED STREET NETWORK

3) Integration of the Natural and Recreational Amenities with the Emerging Urban Center

Rather than turning its back on the natural assets of the Plan Area - as had been the pattern in the initial round of development in Southcenter, new public and private investment will “unearth” Tukwila Pond, Minkler Pond and the Green River and feature them as precious amenities to be integrated with the development of the emerging urban center. New development adjacent to the ponds and river will feature buildings oriented toward the water, and will contribute frontage improvements that add to the appeal and public accessibility of the waterfronts. The emerging “public realm” of Southcenter will increasingly be distinguished by not only new active urban streets and sidewalks, but also waterfront esplanades, pedestrian paths and bikeways. This pedestrian network will provide access to a range of recreational experiences, from urban parks and plazas to more natural environments.

Key improvements to Tukwila Pond will focus on the improving water quality and on preservation of its natural habitat for wildlife and plants, while adding infrastructure that will increase access and usability of the area for everyone.

4) Transit Integrated with Urban Center Development

As the region continues to grow, and as demand surges for increasingly compact, walkable and mixed use formats, a wide range of mobility options, especially rail transit, will become critical components for economic success, livability and sustainability in Southcenter and in the region. These trends will favor the areas of Southcenter in walking distance of the commuter rail station and bus transit center facilities, which can be expected to capture an increasingly large share of regional demand for housing and office development.

In order to realize the full potential of these facilities, existing barriers to visibility, access and convenience will be removed – for example, the Tukwila Sounder Commuter Rail/Amtrak Station will be repositioned to a more central location aligned with the emerging pedestrian spine of the Baker Boulevard corridor. Development around and in walking distance of transit stations will provide much enhanced connectivity to and from transit facilities as they contribute to improvements that incrementally add to the network of walkable, safe, and complete street environments – and in turn, the new transit oriented development will promote system ridership.

Transit will serve as a backbone for new development throughout Southcenter, and make the most of its potential to instigate surrounding development. The most visible, usable example of this will be a new “transit spine” connecting Southcenter’s transit centers. The bus transit center located at the edge of the mall property will be seamlessly connected to the new station along a street designed for walking. All new roads in the northern Southcenter area will connect to this spine, making the stations the focal points of the area’s circulation network. These two transit anchors will also be linked via bus routes and ultimately engaging “people-movers” will decrease the need for a private vehicle in the district.

The station itself will be designed to be attractive, accessible and interconnected to the workings of the Southcenter as a whole. The station platform will be relocated further south to a location at the terminus of the new “transit spine”. The Tukwila Sounder Transit Center will ultimately include a new plaza, with adjacent multi-modal facilities such as a bus terminal, “kiss-ride” drop off, and a park-and-ride lot or garage. In addition to the Sounder station facility, the overall network of transit in Southcenter will be improved. Transit improvements will include improved bus service, better links between bus and train service, and bike routes along Southcenter’s internal streets.

Finally, the bus center will be improved to provide a transit interchange that is well-served by and integrated with its surroundings. New pedestrian paths and public sidewalks will lead pedestrians from surrounding areas to the center, and the most-heavily used route, from the center to the Mall, will be improved with a covered walkway leading directly to the Mall entrance.

1.4 REINVESTMENT STRATEGY

To orchestrate growth and change in the Plan Area in keeping with the community’s vision for the emergent Southcenter, the City leadership intends to promote and guide new investment and change by employing municipal policies and resources strategically. Keeping in mind that strategy must always remain sufficiently nimble to respond to unexpected opportunities and to make best use of resources as they become available, the strategic priorities that the City leadership intends to pursue are the following:

- 1) Promote investment in the full range of retail and entertainment investment in Southcenter: identify appropriate, clear and functional locations for pedestrian-oriented destination retail, auto-oriented retail, and for neighborhood and convenience retail and services. Create a framework that accommodates the widest possible range of investment while avoiding the potential loss of value from inappropriate juxtapositions of different shopping development types.**
- 2) Build on the presence of major retail anchor uses to encourage the augmentation of existing shopping assets with the type of urban amenity-driven, pedestrian-oriented shopping increasingly favored by consumers and investors.**
- 3) Promote the relocation of the commuter rail station to a more centrally located, and more visible and accessible location along the railroad right-of-way; leverage the relocated and refurbished commuter rail station to stimulate investor interest in transit-oriented housing and office development in Southcenter.**
- 4) Use land use and development policies to incubate the development of a model transit-oriented neighborhood within walking distance of the commuter rail station.**

- 5) Promote the consolidation of the railroad rights-of-way in the northeastern quadrant of Southcenter to 1) remove barriers between the district and the train station, and 2) to free up large assembled properties to kick off the redevelopment of the station area neighborhood.**
- 6) Continue to enhance connections between the Mall, the commuter rail station and the refurbished Tukwila Pond in order to reap synergies of destination retail, recreation amenities, increasingly compact housing and office development, convenience and mobility.**
- 7) Concentrate entitlements for the most intensively developed projects in the northern Southcenter area to make the most of high development potential of the area.**
- 8) Coordinate private and public contributions to the block and street system such that each new segment adds to the connectivity and number of alternative routes through Southcenter.**
- 9) Use a combination of development regulations and capital improvements to unearth the natural features of Southcenter - Tukwila Pond, the Green River and Minkler Pond - as public amenities.**
- 10) Streamline the approval process for investors by providing them with clear and detailed information regarding the community’s requirements for the terms of new development to stimulate active private investments.**

