
Existing Conditions

What have we accomplished so far and what are the deficiencies?

Setting

Tukwila is a city that is literally “at the crossroads.” Historically, the City was described this way because of its location at the confluence of the Duwamish and Black Rivers and at natural transportation crossroads at the south end of Lake Washington and the major north south route through the region. It was also, and continues to be, served by rail for both passenger and freight transportation.

State and federal highways were built through Tukwila and bisect the City into separate parts, both physically and functionally, in terms of land use. These major transportation routes also connect Tukwila with adjacent cities and the rest of the Puget Sound region. There are few areas where pedestrians and bicyclists are able to cross these manmade and natural barriers that are posed by the Green River, I-5, I-405, and SR-518.

Tukwila’s topography poses an added challenge because of the steep valley walls and hills separating neighborhoods east-west and north-south. These topographic and man-made facilities have created areas of homogenous land use that are accommodated and reinforced by an auto-dominated transportation system. A layout of neighborhoods separated by major barriers presents challenges to the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment, as well as the development of a connected transportation system for pedestrians and bicyclists. **Figure 1 Tukwila Neighborhoods and Topography** illustrates the neighborhoods and topography of Tukwila.

Despite these challenges, Tukwila is a city with potential for a connected pedestrian and bicycle system. The many activities concentrated within Tukwila, including major employers, a large retail district, and existing recreation opportunities, make the area a place where people want to be. Increased interest at the national level in the role that the built environment (including facilities such as sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes), can play in helping to reduce obesity, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to increase the social capital (or “neighborliness”) of an area also gives support to the projects and policies outlined in Tukwila’s Walk & Roll Plan.

North-South Highways

Several highways traverse the breadth and length of the City, resulting in parts of the City having only a few major streets that weave the City together. Barriers in the form of highways connect Tukwila to different parts of the Puget Sound region by automobile, but they also isolate different areas within the City from each other, creating pockets that differ in terms of neighborhood character, land use, and transportation.

Interstate 5 (I-5) runs north-south and provides a physical barrier to east-west travel. State Route 599 (SR-599) also runs north-south, connecting I-5 to State Route 99 (SR-99; formerly known as Pacific Highway). South of SR-599, State Route 99 runs north-south and is named Tukwila International Blvd (TIB) in Tukwila and International Blvd in

Nonmotorized Transportation Plan

the City of SeaTac. This corridor is characterized by high volumes of truck and other traffic traveling at high speeds. Street conditions, lack of continuous sidewalks (especially in the northern section), and lack of trail linkages make this corridor a challenge for pedestrian and bicycle activity.

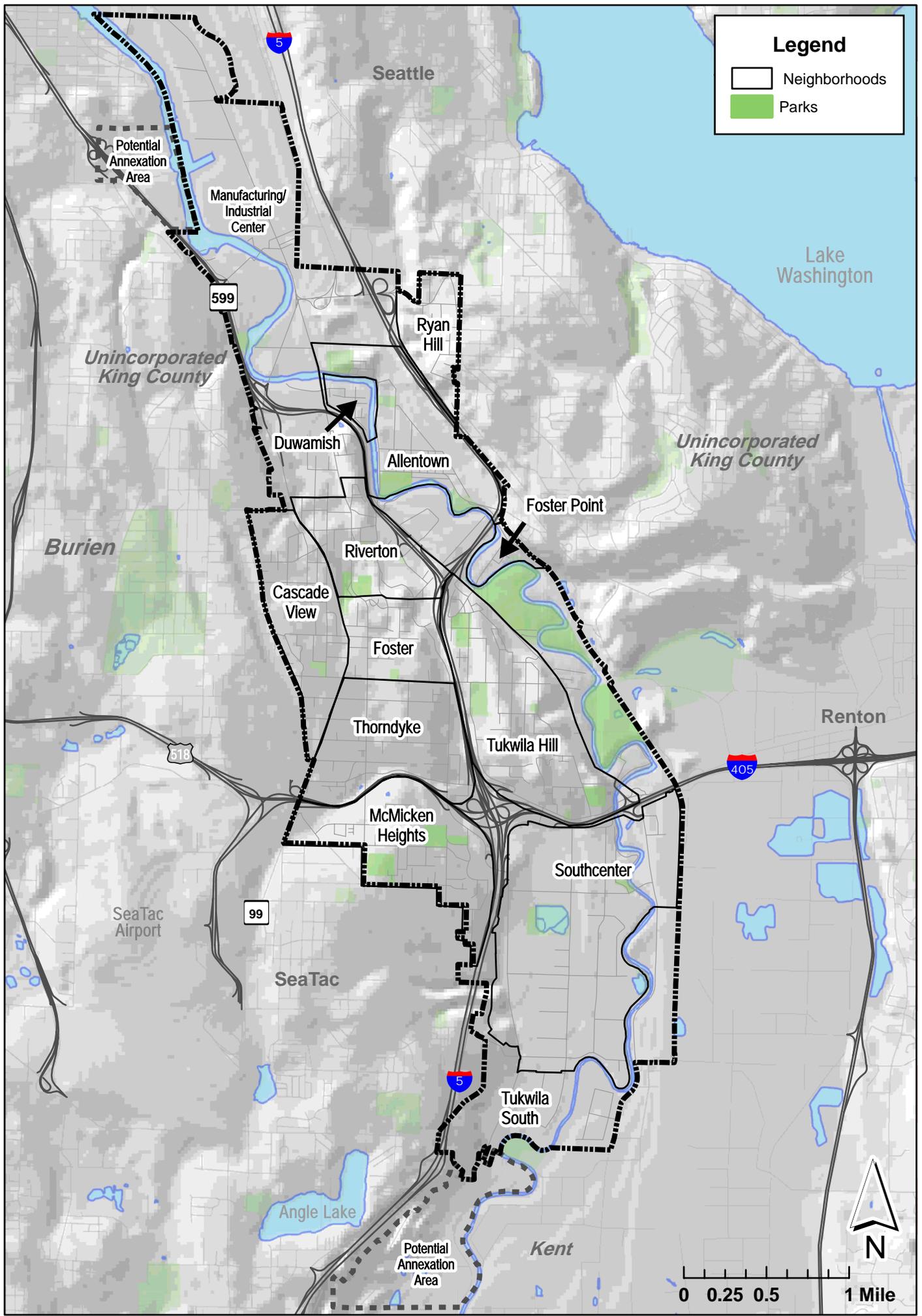
Tukwila has been successful in obtaining grants to upgrade TIB into a five lane street with 14-foot outside travel lanes and separated sidewalks, which will extend from the southern city boundary north to approximately S. 124 Street. TIB continues north of S. 124th Street, where it crosses the Green River and extends into the Manufacturing and Industrial Center. There are opportunities in this area to connect to the Green River Trail as well as the new Duwamish Riverbend Hill Park.

Other high-traffic, high-speed north-south corridors that provide challenges to bicyclists and pedestrians include East Marginal Way S and West Valley Highway/Interurban Ave S. While trail connections are available intermittently along these corridors, more signage is needed to guide trail users to access points. Bike lanes, or at least wide outside lanes, would help improve these areas for bicyclists. Sidewalks are located on both of these corridors. However, the alignment of sidewalks on East Marginal Way is inconsistent (jutting in and out along the west side of the street) due to the location of railroad tracks, and sidewalks are absent along Interurban Ave S on the west side (north of I-5), as well as both sides of the street south of 141st Place S.

East-West Highways

State Route 518 (SR-518) runs east-west from Tukwila's western boundary with the City of SeaTac to I-5, and becomes Interstate 405 (I-405) east of I-5. This route bisects the City of Tukwila, providing a physical barrier for north-south travel, and, combined with I-5, serves to isolate the Southcenter urban center from the rest of the city. Several streets, including Tukwila International Blvd, 42nd Ave S, 51st Ave S, 61st Ave S, and 68th Ave S provide north-south access through the length of the SR-518/I-405 barrier. Klickitat Blvd, S 178th Street, S 180th Street, Strander Blvd, the Green River Trail, and the two bridges over I-405 (61st Ave S and 68th Ave S) are access points into the Southcenter urban center. All of these access points have sidewalks on at least one side of the street for pedestrians. For bicyclists, the Green River Trail (via Baker Blvd) and Klickitat Blvd (which has a dedicated trail from 53rd Ave S to Southcenter Parkway) are the best access options to the Southcenter urban center.

Tukwila Neighborhoods and Topography



Legend

- Neighborhoods
- Parks

0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile

Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

A fairly extensive system of sidewalks and trails exists within Tukwila, though there are many areas where there are gaps in this system that prevent the City from having a connected nonmotorized transportation system. Filling in these gaps could help encourage more people to walk rather than drive for short trips. Though there are currently few roadways in Tukwila that were originally constructed with the intent for use by bicyclists, the existing road network connects to many destinations to which people would like to be able to ride their bikes safely and comfortably, such as major employers, community centers, and regional trails. Retrofitting Tukwila's streets for use by bicyclists is one way to expand the bicycle route network in the city in an efficient manner, making use of existing infrastructure and increasing the range of users of the public right-of-way.

Figure 2 shows the location of existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities, serving as a guide to show where there are existing gaps in the nonmotorized system. Tukwila's planned sidewalks from the City's Capital Improvement Program are shown on this map, although not all are funded. The **Projects** section of this plan contains details on existing conditions within each corridor where a bicycle improvement is proposed, and existing conditions in each of Tukwila's neighborhoods, including the location of sidewalks, trails, paved shoulders, and areas where there are unimproved rights-of-way (recommended for new trail locations).

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Bike Lanes

Although paved shoulders are found in many areas of Tukwila, bike lanes – signed and striped lanes dedicated for use by bicycles - have been constructed in the City only recently. Bike lanes in Tukwila are located along S 144th Street between Tukwila International Blvd and 34th PI S, and along the west side of Macadam Rd S, south of S 150th Street. Future bike lanes are planned or currently under construction for Southcenter Blvd from Tukwila International Blvd to 53rd PI S.

Wide Curb Lanes

Existing wide curb lanes – wide lanes that bicycles must share with automobile traffic - are typically 14 feet wide, and are located on Tukwila International Blvd. Wide curb lanes included in future street improvement designs are planned for Interurban Ave S and the northern section of Tukwila International Blvd. These streets are characterized by high automobile speeds and heavy truck traffic.

Existing Multi-Use Facilities

Paved Shoulders

Paved shoulders have been added to many local access streets and some arterials. However, where paved shoulders have been striped, they are usually only located on one side of the street, and therefore do not provide the safety that a continuous walkway on both sides of the street would provide. Locations where paved shoulders were constructed are usually areas that were annexed to the City of Tukwila, and provide walkway areas as an interim improvement where there were no sidewalks or other designated space for pedestrians.

Nonmotorized Transportation Plan

Paved Multi-Use Trails

There are two paved multi-use trails in Tukwila, the Green River Trail and the Interurban Trail, which combined total approximately 10 miles. These two trails run north-south. There are missing links in these major regional trails, meaning that bicyclists must ride on the roadway to connect to Seattle to the north, or Kent to the south.

Unpaved Multi-Use Trails

Tukwila has nearly two miles of unpaved walking trails that are primarily on unimproved rights-of-way and are referenced by numbers. These trails provide short through connections where there are dead-end streets or sensitive areas such as steep slopes, streams, or wetlands. The majority of the city's existing numbered walking trails are located in the Tukwila Hill neighborhood, but there are also several in the McMicken neighborhood, and one in the Thorndyke neighborhood.

Table 1: Numbered Walking Trails

Number	Location	Length (in feet)
1	S 147 th Street (between 59th Ave S and Interurban Ave S)	1066
2	62nd Ave S (between S 147th and S 149th)	557
3	65th Ave S (between S 151st and S 149th Streets)	1375
4	62nd Ave S (between S 151st and S 153rd Streets)	973
5	57th Ave S (between S 141st Street and Interurban Ave S)	541
6	S 142nd Street (between 53rd and 55th Ave S)	531
7	57th Ave S (between S 153rd and S 152nd Street)	578
8	57th Ave S (between S 153rd Ave S and Southcenter Blvd)	716
9	S 159th Street (between 53rd Ave S and Klickitat Dr)	560
10	S 162nd Street (between 46th and 48th Ave S)	580
11	46th Ave S (between S 148th and S 150th Streets)	617
12	45th Ave S to Crestview Park	147
13	S 142nd Street (between 56th and 57th Ave S)	384
14	S 168th Street (between 51st and 53rd Ave S)	145
15	S 150th St (between Macadam and 56th)	508
TOTAL		9,278

Existing Pedestrian Facilities

Existing Sidewalks

An inventory of Tukwila's sidewalks was conducted in the spring of 2006. The inventory includes the location, construction materials (concrete or asphalt), width of sidewalks, and the location of curb ramps. The location of the City's sidewalks is shown on **Figure 2** as well as on the Neighborhood Maps, **Figures 7-15**.

Sidewalks are located on approximately 29% of the street edges along the City's public streets. In total, there are approximately 57 linear miles of existing sidewalk along City of Tukwila streets, out of a total of 197 linear miles of street edge on which sidewalks could be provided. Taking a closer look at existing sidewalks, approximately 6.15 miles of the 52 miles of sidewalk (or 11% of existing sidewalks) are substandard, with widths less than 4 feet wide.

Tukwila currently prioritizes new locations for sidewalks or paved walkways according to a system developed by former City of Tukwila City Engineer, Ron Cameron, outlined in a report titled "Pedestrian Improvements by Formula – A Process," available from the Tukwila Public Works Department.

This system of prioritization uses a complicated mathematical formula that includes factors related to existing roadway users (pedestrian volumes and types, and vehicle volumes and speeds), and physical characteristics of the roadway. Pedestrian routes that are used as school routes, or used by the handicapped or the elderly receive added consideration. Shoulder and roadway width, and the length of the missing link sidewalk segment, are physical characteristics of the roadway that are considered in this prioritization system.

Within the City of Tukwila Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a Residential Streets Fund that is currently underfunded with no dedicated revenue source or funding allocation. Sidewalks or paved shoulder walkways prioritized through the above prioritization system are added to the Residential Improvements project, which is a project within the Residential Street Fund. The goal of this project is to revitalize neighborhoods through residential street improvements. The range of improvements provided through the Residential Improvements project includes water and sewer improvements, power undergrounding, street lighting and may or may not include sidewalks.

A recommendation of this plan is to adopt a more simplified prioritization system to determine where sidewalks should be built first. This system is based on a prioritization scheme developed and implemented by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Sidewalks prioritized through this system would be included in the CIP fund dedicated for projects in the Walk & Roll Plan, and opportunities would also be sought for their construction with redevelopment projects and grant opportunities.

Arterial streets and school zones are areas that experience particularly high levels of pedestrian activity. Arterial streets tend to connect major destinations within Tukwila, including employers, community centers, schools, and shopping areas. Compared with local access streets, arterial streets have higher traffic volumes and speed limits. Arterial

Nonmotorized Transportation Plan

streets should therefore be priority locations for sidewalks, to provide safety and comfort for the large volume of pedestrians expected in these areas. The Tukwila School District provides bus service for students who live beyond a ½ mile radius from the schools they attend. The areas within a ½ mile of schools can be expected, then to have a large number of children walking to school. Because children do not have the cognitive abilities that adults do, extra safety should be provided in these areas, with sidewalks provided at a minimum. Existing conditions on arterial streets and within school zones are described below:

Arterial coverage

The City of Tukwila has almost 26 miles of sidewalk along arterials within one quarter mile of major activity centers. The total length of street edge along arterial streets within a quarter mile radius of these major activity centers is approximately 36 miles. That leaves approximately 10 miles of street edge on which sidewalks should be constructed to provide walkability around these well-used community features.

An analysis was conducted on the classification of City streets, looking at speeds and other conditions related to walkability. The Speed Limits and Street Functional Classification Map, **Figure 3**, shows the street hierarchy and the speed limit (for streets over 25 miles per hour) for each arterial street. **Table 2** below lists arterial streets (or segments of arterial streets) within Tukwila that are missing sidewalks. Arterial streets are of special focus because these are often the most direct routes to get from one major destination to another. These streets also tend to have higher speeds and traffic volumes than local access streets, making provision of sidewalks especially important for pedestrian safety. The City's current sidewalk standard for sidewalk width is six feet on principal arterials unless the street speed limit is over 35. On the five principal arterials with a speed limit over 35, including Martin Luther King Way, Tukwila International Boulevard, West Valley Highway, East Marginal Way and Boeing Access Road, the standard for sidewalk width is eight feet. Although no adopted standard exists for residential neighborhoods, the City typically builds and requires five feet wide sidewalks.

Table 2: Arterials with No Sidewalks

SEGMENTS LESS THAN 30 MPH
▪ Minkler from Andover Park West to Andover Park East
• S 164 th Street
• 51 st Ave S (from Southcenter Blvd to S 151 st Street)
• Macadam Rd S (from S 152 nd Street to S 144 th Street)
• Macadam Rd S (from S 144 th Street to 43rd Ave S, <i>with the exception of a few small segments where sidewalks are provided on one side of the street</i>)
• Macadam Rd S (from S 135 th Street north to Interurban Ave S, <i>with the exception of a few small segments where sidewalks are provided on one side of the street</i>)
• 53 rd Ave S (from S 144 th to 139 th Street)
• 53 rd Ave S (from S 137 th to 52 nd Ave S)
• S 133 rd - S 132 nd Street from Military Rd S to Tukwila International Blvd)
• S 130 th Street (from Tukwila International Blvd to Macadam Rd S)
• 16 th Ave S
SEGMENTS EQUAL TO 30 MPH
▪ 42 nd Ave S (from southern City limit to Southcenter Blvd/S 154 th Street)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Klickitat Dr (from Southcenter Parkway to Southcenter Blvd--<i>there is a separated walkway from 53rd Ave S to Tukwila's Urban Center on the southwest side of the street</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40th Ave S (from southern end of Southgate Park to S 130th Street)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S 133rd Street south edge and then north edge (from Riverton Park to Interurban Ave S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S 129th Street (from eastern City limits to 42nd Ave S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 115th Street (area in front of future Duwamish/Riverbend Hill Park)
<p>SEGMENTS BETWEEN 35 AND 40 MPH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southcenter Parkway (south of S 180th Street)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S 178th Street (from Southcenter Parkway west to City limits)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S 160th Street (west of Military Rd S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southcenter Blvd (west of I-5)--<i>sidewalks currently under construction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Military Rd S (SeaTac ROW)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interurban Ave S (from Fort Dent Way to S 143rd Street)--<i>planned for construction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West side of Interurban Ave S (from I-5 to Macadam Rd S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ East Marginal Way (from S 112th Street to Boeing Access Rd)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boeing Access Road (minimal, 2' sidewalks are on one side of this street)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Segment of Tukwila International Blvd from SR-599 to north side of river)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S 112th Street
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tukwila International Blvd (from S 112th Street to East Marginal Way improvements just south of where TIB and East Marginal Way merge)
<p>SEGMENTS EQUAL TO AND OVER 45 MPH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tukwila International Blvd (north of S 138th Street to SR-599): <i>there are sidewalks on one side of the road in this area connecting the area between S 132nd Street and S 130th Street (on west side of street); on the east side of the street between S 128th and S 120th Street (designed and funded)</i>
<p>SEGMENTS EQUAL TO AND OVER 50 MPH</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MLK Way (Boeing Access Rd south to City limits)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West Valley Highway (S 180th Street to southern City limits)

School coverage

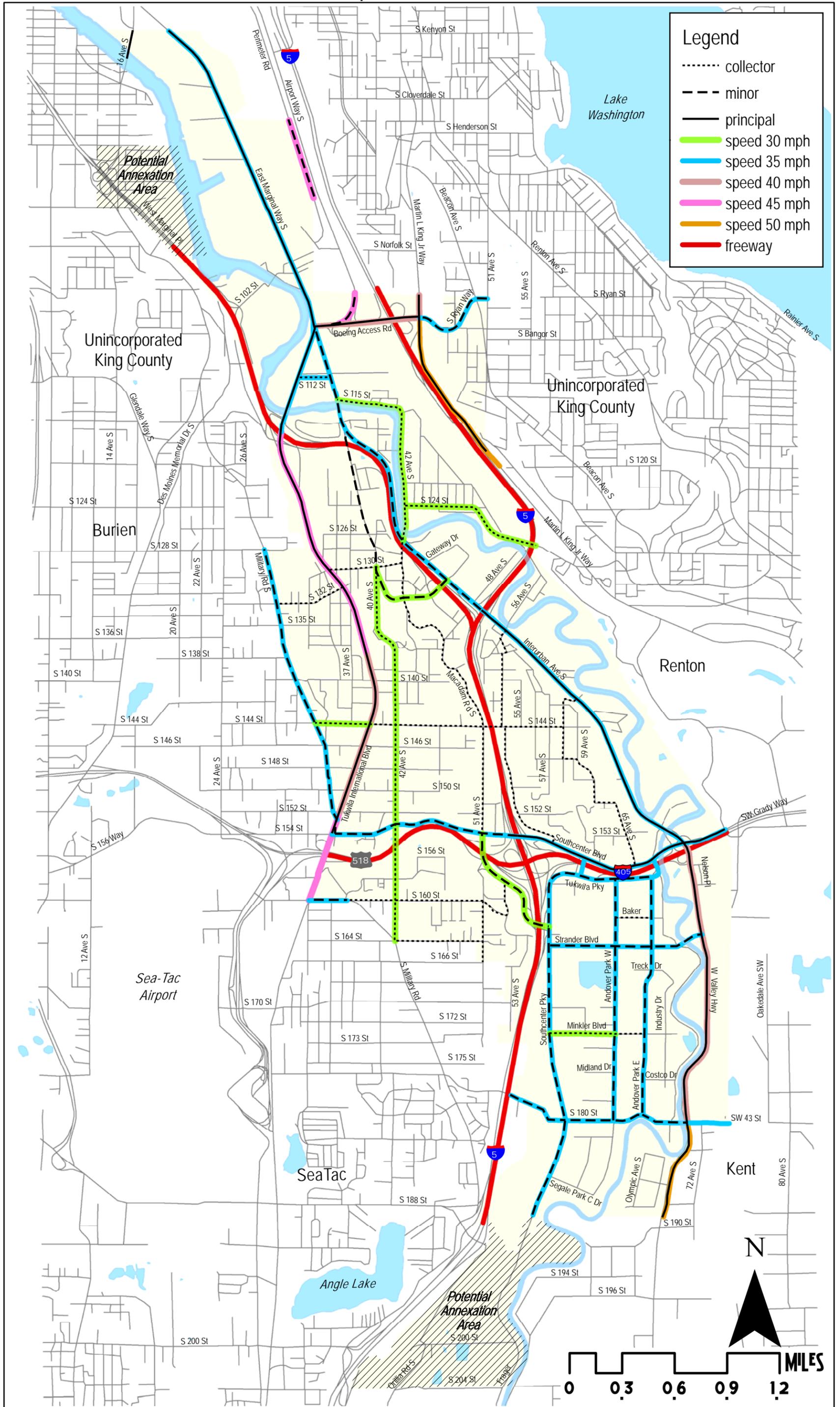
The Sidewalk, Trails and Streets Map Surrounding Schools, **Figure 4**, shows connectivity for pedestrians within ¼- and ½ -mile radii of Tukwila's schools. There are a total of 22 miles of street edge within the 1/4 mile radii of schools. The total number of miles of existing sidewalk is 7.15. That leaves 67.5%, or nearly 15 miles of street edge that are missing sidewalks.

The table below lists those streets within the ¼ mile radii of each school that are missing sidewalks. Two of those streets are arterials and are indicated by an asterisk. As discussed in the previous section, the presence of these streets within both categories or schemes for prioritizing for new sidewalks, suggests that these street edges serve a variety of different pedestrians, including schoolchildren and other neighborhood residents, as well as people who work in the area and/or those who walk to transit stops along these streets.

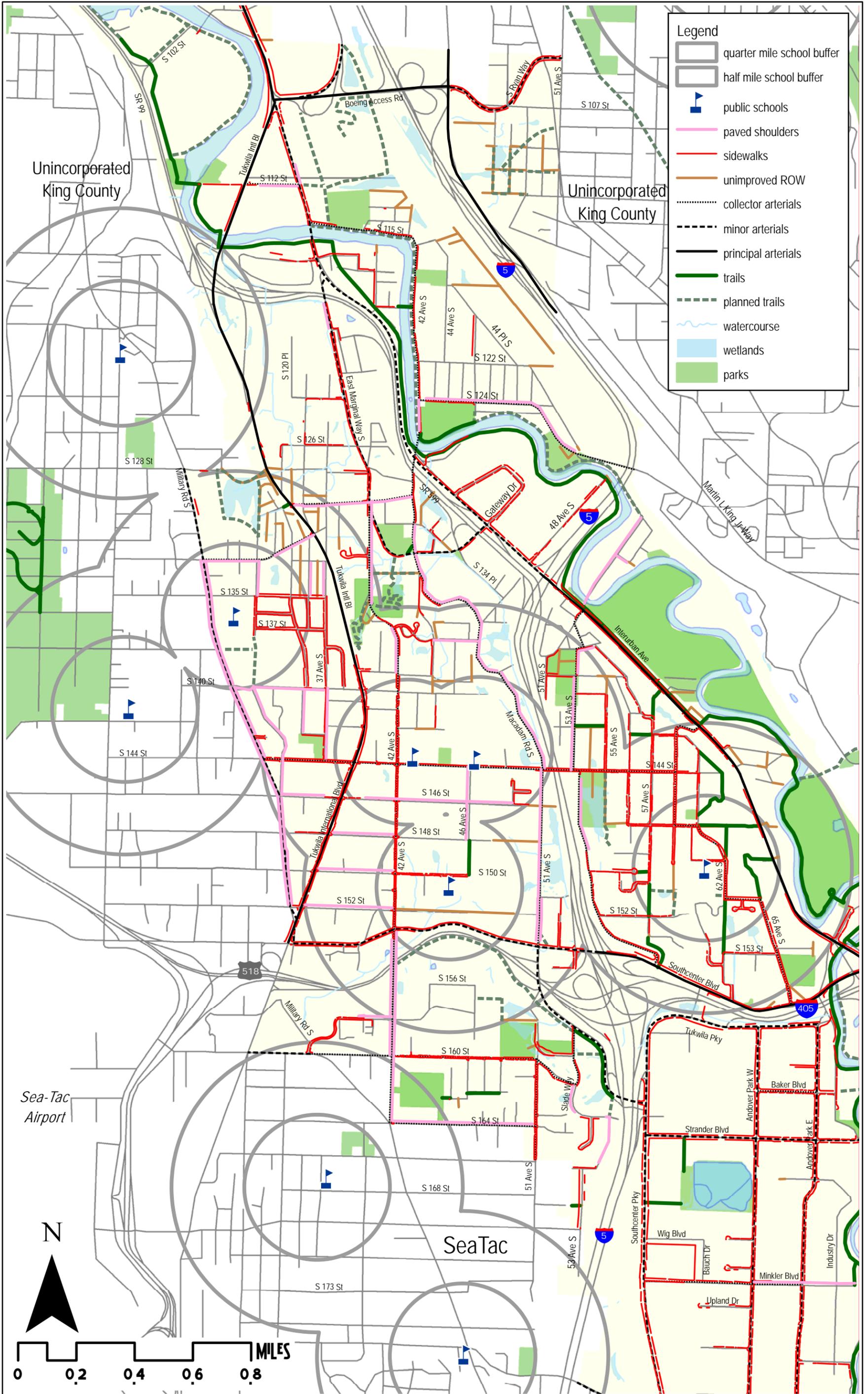
Table 3: Streets Missing Sidewalks within ¼ Mile of Schools

School	Street
<i>Tukwila Elementary</i>	Interurban Ave S (sections of the east side of the street)
	S 152 nd Street (south side)
	59 th Ave S (segments between S 142 nd Street and S 149 th Street)
<i>Thorndyke Elementary</i>	
	46 th Ave S (north of S 150 th Street)
	S 148 th Street (between Tukwila Intl Blvd and 48 th Ave S)
	S 150 th Street (west of 42 and east of 46 th Ave S)
	S 152 nd Street (between Tukwila Intl Blvd and 42 nd Ave S)
<i>Cascade View Elementary</i>	
	32 nd Ave S (north of S 135 th Street)
	34 th Ave (north of 135 St.)
	S 132 nd Street (between 32 nd Ave S and Tukwila Intl Blvd)
	S 133 rd Street – S 132 nd Street (between Military Rd S and 32 nd Ave S)*
	S 135 th Street (b/w Military Road S and 32 Av S)
<i>McMicken Heights</i>	
	S 164 th Street (between 51 st Ave S and Military Rd S)
	42 nd Ave S (between S 160 th Street and S 164 th Street)
<i>Foster High & Showalter Middle School</i>	Macadam Road S (north of S 144 th Street)*
	43 rd Ave S (north of S 142 nd Street)
	44 th Ave S (between S 140 th and S 142 nd Streets)
	46 th Ave S (south of S 144 St)
	48 PI S west edge (north of S 146 th Street)
	51 st Ave S (south of S 144 th Street)
	52 nd Ave S (south of S 142 St.) (Tukwila Hill)
	S 139 th Street (east of 45 th Ave S)
	S 140 th Street (east of Tukwila Intl Blvd)
	S 141 st Street (between Tukwila Intl Blvd and 42 nd Ave S)
	S 142 nd Street (b/w 42 & 44 Av S. and b/w I-5 & 53 Av S)
	S 144 th St (south side b/w Tukwila Intl Blvd and 51 st Ave S)
	S 146 th Street (between Tukwila Intl Blvd and 51 st Ave S)
* Indicates an arterial street.	

Speed Limit and Street Functional Classifications



Sidewalks, Trails, & Streets Surrounding Schools



Maintenance

Organizationally, the City divides maintenance of City pedestrian and bicycle facilities among the Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Works Department, and property owners. The Parks Department is responsible for trails. Maintenance of paved and unpaved trails falls into two categories – scheduled and unscheduled. Scheduled maintenance of trails, primarily during the growing season, involves mowing of edges and cutting back any overhanging shrubbery adjacent to the trails. Unscheduled maintenance typically involves hard surface repair due to surface break-downs from tree roots and tree limb removal from storms. The Parks Superintendent has five full time and three ¾ time maintenance specialists and technicians as well as extra labor when needed, who maintain the multi-use paved and unpaved trails within the City and the entire parks system.

Within the Maintenance and Operations Division of the Public Works Department is a Transportation Superintendent with nine maintenance specialists and workers, including a street sweeper vehicle. Arterial streets are swept approximately eight times a year and after any sanding due to icy street conditions. City regulations require adjacent property owners to maintain their sidewalks.

Past Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Expenditures

Central Business District (CBD) Sidewalk Plan

The City of Tukwila adopted a plan in 1989 through which a continuous sidewalk system was constructed within Tukwila's CBD, the area which today is known as the Southcenter urban center. Prior to the CBD sidewalk program, sidewalks within the urban center were constructed in a piecemeal fashion as improvements were made to private property. The result of the CBD Sidewalk Plan was a continuous system of sidewalks at least six feet wide within the urban center.

Residential Street Program

Prior to the growth by annexation that occurred during the early 1990s, the City was able to fund a Residential Street Program that undergrounded overhead utility lines and constructed curb, gutter and sidewalks on existing residential local access streets. The Tukwila Hill neighborhood was the original Tukwila town site and benefited from a well funded residential street improvement program. For the past several years, the Residential Street Program has been unfunded.

Encouragement and Education Programs

Bike Helmet Program

The Tukwila Fire Department, in conjunction with the members of Tukwila IAFF Local #2088 and the Tukwila Children's Foundation, make available affordable bicycle helmets to the community. The bicycle helmets are available at Station #54, located at 4237 S. 144th street, as well as various community events. All sizes are available from toddler to adult and the wearer must be present for a customized fit.

Nonmotorized Transportation Plan

Since the program was started in 2002, over 550 helmets have been either sold or given away at City of Tukwila events including the annual Bicycle Rodeo and Tukwila Days.

As part of the Bike Helmet Program, to reward safe bicycle riding habits, fire department personnel issue safe rider citations. The citation entitles those who are wearing a bicycle helmet to a free subway sandwich. To date, few of these citations have been awarded. Better promotion of the program could help to increase participation in this program, at the same time encouraging safe bicycle riding habits in Tukwila.

Multi-Modal Connections

King County Metro provides bike racks that can carry two bicycles on all Metro buses. Additionally, Metro provides bike racks and bike lockers at Park & Ride locations and some transit stops in King County. In Tukwila, Metro provides six bike lockers at the Park & Ride at Interurban Ave S & 52nd Ave S in partnership with the Bicycle Alliance of Washington.

Sound Transit provides bike racks for two bicycles per train car on both the Sounder Commuter Rail and on the future LINK Light Rail System. Sound Transit also provides bike lockers at the Tukwila Sounder Station (located on Longacres Way), and will have bike lockers at the LINK Light Rail Station at Tukwila International Blvd and S 154th Street as well.