



CHAPTER 4

linking land use and transportation

A key part of the overall work on *Destination 2030* was to provide more specificity on the linkage of land use and transportation planning contained in VISION 2020, as well as to add clarification and detail to existing growth management policies and provisions. The growth strategy is built around the concept that additional transportation infrastructure and services will be provided to areas that are accepting an increased share of the region's growth. It has become clear in recent years that the region must increase investment in targeted areas if it is to achieve its vision for growth.

The regional growth and transportation strategy has focused on preserving and developing compact communities, redeveloping urban transportation corridors, and directing employment and housing growth into centers and in patterns where it is easier to walk, bike and use transit. Additional urban design guidance, as well as descriptions of different types of development strategies and financial incentives, will reinforce the critical link between land use and transportation planning.

The 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan emphasized the creation of opportunities for improving transit use and non-motorized travel. *Destination 2030* expands on this base to provide further direction on strategies and actions that will make growth management planning and investment in the region's transportation system mutually supportive.

The continued development and support of centers is a core component of the region's growth strategy. The twenty-one designated urban centers are the most visible examples of the region's progress in integrating land use and transportation policy. The centers strategy was devised to achieve multiple growth management goals, including the creation of an efficient transportation system that supports travel options by all modes and maximizes the benefits of system investments. Transit and non-motorized travel modes can reduce the number and length of auto trips and are, in general, supported by higher concentrations of development and activity.

Although we often focus our discussion on these twenty-one centers, we must recognize that other growth strategy concepts, such as compact communities, urban corridors, mixed-use districts, and transit station areas remain an integral part of the overall vision for growth in the region. When examining the function of

centers in the context of how they affect the metropolitan transportation system, it is important to acknowledge that other concentrations may act very much like the designated urban centers and can also benefit from the strategies we employ for center enhancement and development.

Recent research has shown that block sizes within much of the urban growth area are often large and scaled to cars rather than pedestrians. In many neighborhoods, movement between residential and commercial land uses is blocked by the lack of physical connections. Even where they adjoin each other, apartment complexes, schools, retail and other commercial developments seldom face each other, and high fences surround many properties, blocking direct routes. Major roads or even freeways often separate multifamily areas from commercial districts. Analysis of urban form and basic infrastructure in urban centers and clusters in the region suggests that deficiencies in these areas have significant performance impacts on both the local and metropolitan transportation systems.

Now that the first phase of planning under the Growth Management Act is completed, many regional agencies and local governments are refining growth plans to address some of these finer issues by creating incentives and encouraging specific types of development in compact communities. As part of these refinements growth and transportation plans may increasingly focus on making strategic infrastructure investments to help the regional transportation system function better within communities. The Regional Council advocates the use of incentives to recognize places that are achieving the types of development that support the regional strategy of compact development and pedestrian and transit-supportive urban form.

New *Destination 2030* growth strategies build on the relationship of land use and transportation presented in VISION 2020 and 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan policies. Three broad groups of actions that address the character of growth have been included in *Destination 2030* to better articulate this relationship. These groups are 1) physical design guidelines, 2) characteristics of urban centers and concentrated development, and 3) best practices and tools. The region's investment principles and strategy, described in Chapter 3, place a high priority on investments that support the region's growth strategy.

Physical Design Guidelines

The region is establishing and will promote urban development and design guidelines for designated Urban Centers and high capacity transit station areas, pursuant to Growth Management Act requirements (RCW 47.80). The guidelines are intended to advance fundamental design principles and site development characteristics that can serve as a starting point to achieving successful and mutually supportive connections between land use and transportation. In addition to the ten guidelines (see sidebar), the region will support a future work program to develop additional guidance on urban form, site design, parking, and accessibility. This work will help the Regional Council to assist local jurisdictions in their efforts to support planning and development in regional Urban Centers, high capacity transit station areas, and in other types of concentrated development throughout the region.

Characteristics of Centers and Concentrated Development

Over 70 percent of growth in the region over the next 30 years is forecast to locate within the urban growth area, but outside currently designated urban centers. A hierarchy of places already exists and will continue to develop in the region to provide services, entertainment, housing, and other needs. Recognizing that all centers and areas of concentrated development in the region are not intended to be the same, the Regional

PHYSICAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Encourage a mix of complementary land uses, particularly uses that generate pedestrian activity and transit ridership.
2. Encourage compact growth by addressing planned density.
3. Link neighborhoods, connect streets, sidewalks, and trails.
4. Integrate activity areas with surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Locate public and semipublic uses near high capacity transit stations in designated urban centers and activity centers.
6. Design for pedestrians and bicyclists.
7. Provide usable open spaces for the public.
8. Manage the supply of parking.
9. Promote the benefits of on-street parking.
10. Reduce and mitigate the effects of parking.



City of Redmond

Council will work with local agencies having an interest in developing designated urban centers, high capacity transit station areas, and compact communities to provide helpful descriptions of and guidance for the characteristics that contribute to successful compact communities. This work will include the development of guidance for population and employment densities for different types of centers and compact communities in the region. See discussion in Chapter 2.

Best Practices and Tools

Along with design considerations, research has shown that traditional land use planning tools, such as zoning and development regulations, may not sufficiently guide new development toward the objectives of the regional growth vision. Additional tools, such as regulatory reforms, financial incentives, and development strategies can leverage local planning to focus growth and support compact communities, and have the potential to make development inside targeted areas simpler and quicker, thereby making it more competitive to build in these locations. The region encourages the use of incentives to help develop designated urban centers and high capacity transit station areas. The region will investigate and promote different types of regulatory reforms and development strategies. Some of the more promising approaches are discussed in the adjoining side bars.

While reforms will help, finding revenues sufficient to provide the services and infrastructure necessary to serve new development remains a critical missing link in growth management planning. Financial incentives have the potential to assist communities to support the targeted growth. Specific incentives are discussed in the

BEST PRACTICES: INVESTIGATING REGULATORY REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Concurrency requires needed facilities and services either to be available at the time of development, or funding to be available to provide the facilities within six years. Jurisdictions can develop a strategic, sub-area approach to concurrency that would more effectively foster development in targeted locations.

Streamlining Local Review and Permitting Processes could make development simpler, quicker, and more cost-effective in targeted locations, such as in urban centers and station areas. Prioritizing the processing of permits for projects in an urban center would begin to provide competitive advantage.

Local Permitting could foster development that supports alternatives to driving alone by addressing density, design, and mixed-use in specific detail as part of the permitting process.

“Salmon-Friendly” Development Practices are now required in our region in response to the Endangered Species Act. Understanding where development should be limited, and promoting project design that minimizes impacts on habitat should also result in savings of time and money.

Benefit Assessment District programs take advantage of fees and taxes to pay for improvements by those landowners who specifically benefit from the improvements. These programs can provide the necessary funds to pay for infrastructure needed to promote desired development in specific areas.

Transfer of Development Rights programs allow owners of rural or potential open space land to sell their rights to build to landowners at other locations in urban areas, promoting development in centers and other compact communities, while preserving open space.

Interlocal Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding establish contracts between jurisdictions and agencies on how to address mutually agreed-upon topics, such as standards for capacity, design, or levels-of-service, helping jurisdictions to work together on many issues.

BEST PRACTICES: INVESTIGATING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Tax Increment Financing “captures” the additional property taxes generated by private development projects to finance the up-front public development costs. These funds could provide the necessary amenities to help spur development in targeted locations.

Tax Incentive Zones for Transit might include tax breaks for mixed-use developments in targeted locations, such as areas around transit stations and along transit corridors. Fostering development in these areas would provide access to transit to a greater number of people, thereby reducing the need for automotive use.

Multi-Family Tax Abatement programs encourage new multi-family housing by forgiving the property tax payments for a period of time. Extending this program to all designated urban centers, and possibly transit station areas, could foster housing development in these areas.

Location Efficient Mortgage Programs allow consumers to qualify for higher mortgages based on potential automotive cost savings realized through living in dense areas with transit service. Extending this program would allow a wider range of people to live in transit-supported neighborhoods, potentially increasing transit ridership.

Revenue Sharing programs allow communities to contribute a percentage of their taxes to a regional pool to fund mutually beneficial projects, or to redistribute funds to meet specified and locally-determined goals.

Land Value Taxation programs shift property tax assessments from improvements on the land (such as buildings) to the land itself. A targeted use of this tool could potentially decrease speculative holdings, thereby encouraging development of underutilized properties.

adjacent side bar. Together, the reforms and incentives can add effective tools to cities' growth management planning toolboxes. While the impact of some of these tools by themselves may be somewhat modest, the cumulative effect of implementing a package of several of these techniques in a targeted and strategic manner could greatly enhance a local jurisdiction's ability to guide and focus development in desired locations.



City of Tacoma

These growth strategies and initiatives focus on approaches to designing, encouraging, and financing the type of development and services that are desired to help create urban centers and compact communities. See the accompanying side bars for brief descriptions of financial development strategies. To help promote these strategies, the Regional Council will gather and distribute information as it relates to urban form and design, financial incentives for desired development, and other best practices and development strategies.