COMPACT URBAN COMMUNITIES

PSRC Vision 2040 policies and Pierce County Countywide Policies direct the development of compact urban communities that have diversity of housing, high connectivity, and provide for multi-modal transportation including pedestrian, bicycle and transit. Many of the same elements are found in Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) policies. TOD is a land use strategy intended to promote efficient use of land and transportation infrastructure with places of relatively higher density, pedestrian-friendly development with a mix of land uses located within an easy walk of a bus or rail transit center.

The central Pierce County UGA presents opportunities and alternative ways to provide for centers/compact communities, these include Centers/Central Places and Transit-Oriented Corridors:

- **Centers/Central Places (Centers):** Identification of existing developed areas comprised of roadway intersections or existing commercial/employment development that would serve as a focus of a future center/compact community; and

- **Transit-Oriented Corridor Center (Corridors):** A Transit-Oriented Corridor is located along major roadways where existing development patterns provide the functions of a center, but in a linear corridor. These Corridors may be enhanced with transit and increased connectivity between transit-oriented residential and commercial areas.

An example of a Central Place/Local Center is the Garfield/Pacific Lutheran University area. This area is designated an Activity Center and has an existing Transit Center. The specific focus of the area is Garfield Street South which is being redeveloped into a mixed use commercial/residential center. This Central Place is identified in the Parkland Spanaway Midland Community Plan. Other Central Places/Local Centers will be designated and mapped in the future.

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Historically, the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan and Community Plans have designated commercial, industrial, and higher density residential along four major roads in the central urban growth area: Pacific Avenue South (SR7), Meridian East (SR161), 112th Street East, and 176th Street East. These roads connect the community plan areas and provide commercial services and employment industries.
In the 2015 update of the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, the County adopted policies to support compact centers and transit-oriented corridors. In 2016, County Council adopted the “Urban Communities of Pierce” Report and Implementation Actions through Resolution No. 2016-150s. This resolution is intended to expand upon and implement the idea carried forward in the community plans.

The areas identified as mixed use centers and corridors in the community plans have been developing as commercial and higher density residential uses. Figure XX, Existing Land Use Pattern, shows the current zoning in the area. The various shades of red are mixed use zones, the yellow shades are moderate density single-family residential, and the blue shades are industrial employment. The existing pattern was taken into account as the basis for updating the concept of Centers and Corridors.

**Centers & Corridors Concept**

The Centers and Corridors concept builds on the historic land use pattern and supports the development patterns described in the community plans. The key components to enhancing these areas include:

**Compact, High-Density Communities**

Establish centers along major transportation corridors that will develop into compact communities. Between centers, overlay the area within ¼ mile on either side of the corridors with a density of 12+ units per acre to create land use patterns and densities that will support transit.

**Access to Transit**

Seek ways to serve the corridors with short-interval local transit, such as trolleys for shopping and commuter transit, and express service to regional connections, such as the Puyallup and Lakewood transit stations.
Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity

Develop pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout the corridor connecting to centers. Focus on ensuring connections from residential areas to goods and services for everyday needs.

Target Infrastructure Investments

Focus infrastructure expenditures to support increased density and transit services within these areas. Centers should be the primary recipient of investments while corridors would be improved with support infrastructure.

GOAL LU-10 Establish a system of Centers and Corridors in the central Pierce County Urban Growth Area.

The Centers and Corridors shall be established along the following arterial and state highways in the County:

- 112th Street East
- Meridian Avenue (SR 161)
- 176th Street East
- Pacific Avenue (SR 7); and,
- Canyon Road East
The County will focus future population, housing, and employment growth in the Centers and Corridors in order to:

**LU-11.1** Reduce development pressure on single family suburban areas and surrounding rural areas.

**LU-11.2** Provide land uses and densities that would support and enhance transit service to and within the Centers and Corridors.

**LU-11.3** Enhance economic development.

**LU-11.4** Use the existing infrastructure and focus future infrastructure improvements.

**LU-11.5** Decrease the per capita costs of infrastructure by serving more residents with existing and proposed improvements.
GOAL LU-12 Designate Centers/Central Places and Transit-Oriented Corridors within the UGA. These Centers/Central Places and Transit-Oriented Corridors shall be characterized by the following:

LU-12.1 Clearly defined geographic boundaries; with a focus on the ¼ mile on either side of the designated corridors.
LU-12.2 Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support high-capacity transit;
LU-12.3 Pedestrian-oriented land uses and amenities;
LU-12.4 Pedestrian connections shall be provided throughout;
LU-12.5 Urban design standards which reflect the local community;
LU-12.6 Provisions to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use especially during peak hours and commute times;
LU-12.7 Provisions for bicycle use;
LU-12.8 Sufficient public open spaces and recreational opportunities; and
LU-12.9 Uses which provide both daytime and nighttime activities.
LU-12.10 Has existing or will develop uses that provide a draw such as a major institution, cluster of commercial/shopping activities, or recreational and entertainment activities.

GOAL LU-13 Recognize and map Central Places/Local Centers and Transit-Oriented Corridors through the comprehensive plan and community planning process.

LU-13.1 The Garfield/Pacific Lutheran University area is designated as a Central Place/Local Center. Center
LU-13.2 Recognize other Local Centers designated through community plans update process.

The Centers

Urban Center – High Density Compact Communities
- High density residential
- Pedestrian oriented
- Transit Hubs
- Compact communities with a minimum density 30 units per acre.

Town Center – Auto Oriented Commercial
- Focused on commercial development
- More auto-oriented use
- Connected to the transit system
- Provide high-density residential opportunities with a minimum density of 18 units per acre.

Urban Center - Garfield Urban Center

Town Center - Sunrise Village
LU-13.3 Evaluate Central Places/Local Centers for designation as Centers of Local Importance for regional planning purposes.

GOAL LU-14 Establish two types of Centers, Urban Centers and Town Centers

LU-14.1.1 Urban Centers shall be designated at the following locations:
- Garfield/Pacific Lutheran University area
- Spanaway/ Sprinker Center area; and
- South Hill/Longston Place Area

LU-14.1.2 Town Centers shall be located at the following locations:
- Frederickson Town Center
- Sunrise Village; and,
- Mountain Highway (Walmart/SR7)

GOAL LU-15 Establish three types of corridors, Urban Corridor, Neighborhood Corridor and Employment Corridor

LU-15.1 Corridors are located between centers and overlay the area within ¼ mile on either side of the corridors with a density of 12+ units per acre to create land use patterns and densities that will support transit.

LU-15.2 Corridors shall be developed with frequent local transit and express service to regional connections, such as the Tacoma Dome, Puyallup and Lakewood transit stations.

LU-15.3 Corridors allow more auto-oriented uses, contain transit supportive densities and capture spillover growth for the Centers.

GOAL LU-16 The County will develop high quality, compact communities within Centers that:

- Impart a sense of place;
- Preserve local character;
- Provide for mixed uses and choices in housing types; and
- Encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.

The Corridors

Urban Corridor – High Density –Auto Oriented Commercial

Urban Centers are intended to be high density residential, with more auto-oriented uses however are still connected to the transit system with a density of over 18 units per acre.

Neighborhood Corridor – Residential Transition

Neighborhood Corridors are intended to provide a transition from the Urban Corridor to surrounding single family areas. Neighborhood Corridors are able to develop at slightly higher densities than typical single-family zones and allow for some neighborhood-scale services and amenities for residents in walking distance.

Employment Corridor – Jobs Based/Industrial

The Employment zone is intended to attract jobs-based industry and offices. The Employment Corridors are intended to break up areas of residential and commercial with larger employers, particularly on Corridors intended for freight movement, such as Canyon Road East. Job creation in the Employment Corridors should help alleviate the need for residents to travel outside the area.
GOAL LU-17  The County shall design public buildings and public spaces that contribute to the unique sense of community and a sense of place.

GOAL LU-18  The County shall design transportation projects and other infrastructure to achieve Promote community development objectives of connectivity, walkability, bikability and transit support through the design and construction of transportation and other infrastructure.

LU-18.1  Promote context-sensitive design of transportation facilities, both for facilities to fit in the context of the communities in which they are located, as well as applying urban design principles for projects in centers and transit station areas.

GOAL LU-19  Use community design that enhances the streetscape including:

LU-19.1  Wide sidewalks;
LU-19.2  Buildings that are located in close proximity to the right of way to create pedestrian streetscape;
LU-19.3  Safe pedestrian connection between the street and building entrances;
LU-19.4  Street trees;
LU-19.5  Landscape strips;
LU-19.6  Pedestrian amenities;
LU-19.7  Allowance for vertical mixed use development in selected places; and
LU-19.8  Transit amenities.

GOAL LU-20  Road designs in the centers and corridors must provide for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit.
LU-20.1  Planning the design of the roads should focus on the particular need of that roadway to provide for the range of users.
LU-20.2  The County shall work with Washington State Department of Transportation to upgrade street designs to support Centers and Corridors.

GOAL LU-21  The Centers/Central Places and Transit-Oriented Corridors will be provided with transit amenities including bus stops, commuter parking and transit designated lanes.

GOAL LU-22  The County will coordinate with local transit providers to support high frequency transit that provides access to services within the entire Center/Central Place or Transit-Oriented Corridor and access to transit facilities that connect to regional destinations activity centers.

Examples of Community Design Streetscapes Enhancements

- Wide sidewalks;
- Buildings that are located in close proximity to the right of way to create pedestrian streetscape.
- Safe pedestrian connection between the street and building entrances;
- Street trees;
- Landscape strips;
- Pedestrian amenities;
- Allowance for vertical mixed use development in selected places; and
- Transit amenities.
GOAL LU-23  **Urban Centers** shall be characterized by the following:

LU-23.1 Clearly defined geographic boundaries;
LU-23.2 Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support high-capacity transit;
LU-23.3 Land uses and amenities supportive of walking and biking and other non-motorized transportation, active transportation;
LU-23.4 Active transportation Connections for pedestrians and bicyclists and other non-motorized transportation shall be prioritized over automobile related improvements provided throughout;
LU-23.5 Urban design standards which reflect the local community;
LU-23.6 Provisions to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use especially during peak hours and commute times;

GOAL LU-24  **Urban Centers** shall be characterized by the following:

LU-24.1 Highest-density multifamily uses along with goods and services for resident’s everyday needs and leisure activities Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support transit;
LU-24.2 Hubs for activity and offer a variety of options to residents within walking distance of their residence
LU-24.3 Connections between residential developments and transit corridors and to nearby parks and recreation opportunities are a priority.
LU-24.4 Significant transit opportunities including transit centers, park and ride facilities, high capacity transit stops, and connections to regional transit opportunities.
LU-24.5 Pedestrian and bicycle connections provided should have priority over automobile related improvements throughout.
LU-24.6 Architectural and streetscape design themes that create a sense of place including consistent landscaping, pedestrian accommodations, artworks and public spaces.
LU-24.7 Building orientation is to the street at a scale and design to enhance the pedestrian space.

**Supportive Street Designs**
- Reduction in access points
- Wider sidewalks to create a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
- Transit designated lanes and bus pullouts
- Road Diets
- Bicycle paths and separated lanes
- Intersections that support and placemaking for Centers

**Urban Centers**
Minimum Density: 30 units /acre
Maximum Density: Unlimited
Maximum Height: 65 feet (may be increase with Transfer Development Rights (TDR)
**Towne Centers**

**GOAL LU-25**

Towne Centers shall be characterized by the following:

**LU-25.1** Primarily commercial uses centered on existing commercial centers or big box development.

**LU-25.2** Moderate high-density multifamily uses (greater than 18 units per acre) and attached single family residential and goods and services for resident’s everyday needs and leisure activities Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support high-capacity transit;

**LU-25.3** Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support transit;

**LU-25.4** Pedestrian and bicycle connections provided should have priority over automobile related improvements throughout;

**LU-25.5** Urban design standards which reflect the local community;

**LU-25.6** Surrounding land uses which may constrain development, as an Towne center including:

- **LU-25.6.1** Proximity to an airport( area of influence and flight path constraints)
- **LU-25.6.2** Proximity to a freight corridor.
- **LU-25.6.3** Existing commercial pattern which establishes the use of the center.

**Urban Corridors**

**GOAL LU-26**

Urban Corridors shall be characterized by the following:

**LU-26.1** Serve as connections between the Centers and continue the density and land use features of the Centers while allowing more auto-oriented uses and reduced design requirements.

**LU-26.2** Focused on the immediate area around and fronting on the four arterials and state highways the make up the Centers and Corridors framework( approximately 1/8 mile on either side of the arterials and highways)

**LU-26.3** Highest intensity corridor with Intensity/density of land uses sufficient to support high-capacity transit.

**LU-26.4** Connectivity between commercial developments and between residential areas and the main corridor.

**LU-26.5** Pedestrian and bicycle connections shall be provided throughout and given priority for funding and construction to complete connections within and to corridors.
LU-26.6 Urban design standards which reflect the local community including:

LU-26.6.1 Building perception, orientation, and aesthetics
LU-26.6.2 Reduced or no setbacks allowing buildings to enhance the pedestrian space along the corridor.

NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDORS

GOAL LU-27 Neighborhood Corridors shall be characterized by the following:

LU-27.1 Located adjacent to Urban Corridors and parallel the Urban Corridor and the designated arterials and highways.
LU-27.2 Limited areas that are primarily established in single family neighborhoods however are located within \( \frac{1}{4} \) mile walkable area along the Centers and Corridors arterials and state highways.
LU-27.3 Provide transition from the Urban Centers to single family neighborhoods outside the Corridor while still allowing all types of residential and limited civic and neighborhood commercial services.
LU-27.4 Provide connectivity between development and to the transit corridors.
LU-27.4.1 Internal roads should have pedestrian and bicycle paths and outlet to the external road network.
LU-27.4.2 New developments should act as a continuance of and not separate from existing developments.
LU-27.5 Non-residential uses allowed at a neighborhood scale and integrated with residential design.

EMPLOYMENT CORRIDORS

GOAL LU-28 Employment Corridors shall be characterized by the following:

LU-28.1 Jobs-based industrial, business and office uses focused on existing areas of light to heavy industrial land uses.
LU-28.2 No new residential uses are permitted except for single family homes on existing lots.
LU-28.3 Frontage roads or other connections shall be made in order to improve access to industrial properties.
LU-28.4 The medians in Canyon Road shall be reviewed and modified as necessary to improve access.
LU-28.5 Pedestrian and bicycle connections shall be provided throughout.