

Lakewood Station District

Existing Land Use and Zoning
February 2020

Introduction

The Lakewood Station District Subarea (LSDS) is an area of opportunity for future growth and development within Lakewood's Urban Center. A variety of conditions make the LSDS an ideal place for subarea planning. There are several neighborhoods within a half mile of the Lakewood Station with a mix of underutilized multi-family and mixed residential zones. With its proximity to I-5 and the Sounder regional commuter rail, it is a good location for employment. Since there are few environmental constraints, this is an ideal place to explore higher densities to take advantage of the proximity to high capacity transit. The Town Center District is also only about a mile away (Exhibit 1) so there is also an opportunity to deepen connections between the two subareas.

The City received a Department of Commerce Increasing Residential Building Capacity grant to develop a subarea plan for transit-oriented development near the station. It is expected that development of the subarea plan will be accompanied by a planned action and form-based code.

The current LSDS study area boundary is shown in Exhibit 2. As part of the subarea planning process, this primary area will be the focus of land use and housing review, but the boundary is subject to change. Generally, the boundary incorporates the area within a half mile of the Sounder station but does not include areas southeast of I-5, since the freeway provides a significant barrier. The study area spans the area from the interchange with Bridgeport Way to the interchange with SR-512, to capture the full transportation corridor to the north and south of the station. In order to analyze transportation connections to Lakewood's Downtown, this project will look an extended area north and west of the primary study area (Exhibit 1). The extended study area will not address land use or housing but will look at ways to enhance multi-modal transportation linkages.

Exhibit 1. Lakewood Station in Proximity to Downtown



Source: BERK, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

Exhibit 2. Lakewood Station District Study Area



Source: BERK, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

Existing Conditions

CURRENT LAND USE

Current land use in the study area is a mixture of residential, commercial, civic, and industrial uses. Vacant land accounts for about 17% of the parcel acreage in the study area. A map of existing land use, based on information from the Pierce County Assessor, is shown in Exhibit 4.

Industrial development is limited to a few parcels and includes light industrial type uses such as storage, small warehouse, or shipping. Civic uses include the Sounder Station, the SR-512 Park and Ride, and a fire station. A Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) maintenance facility, centrally located in the study area and between I-5 and Pacific Highway SW and northeast of the Sounder station, is considering relocation to make space for new economic and employment growth. This proposal is called Lakewood Landing.

Commercial businesses line Pacific Highway and Bridgeport Way. Along the Pacific Highway corridor development is characterized by its variety. Retail uses range from espresso stands to strip commercial development to auto sales. There are also several motels along the corridor, mostly near the freeway interchanges. Motels serve visitors to Lakewood and Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), which is just southeast of the study area on the other side of I-5. Saint Clare Hospital is located in the western end of the study area, north of Pacific Highway and east of Bridgeport Way. Structures in the Pacific Highway corridor vary in age, style, and quality. Exhibit 5 shows structure age. Commercial development along Bridgeport is mostly strip commercial with smaller scale retail, service, and restaurant uses built in the 1960s and 1970s.

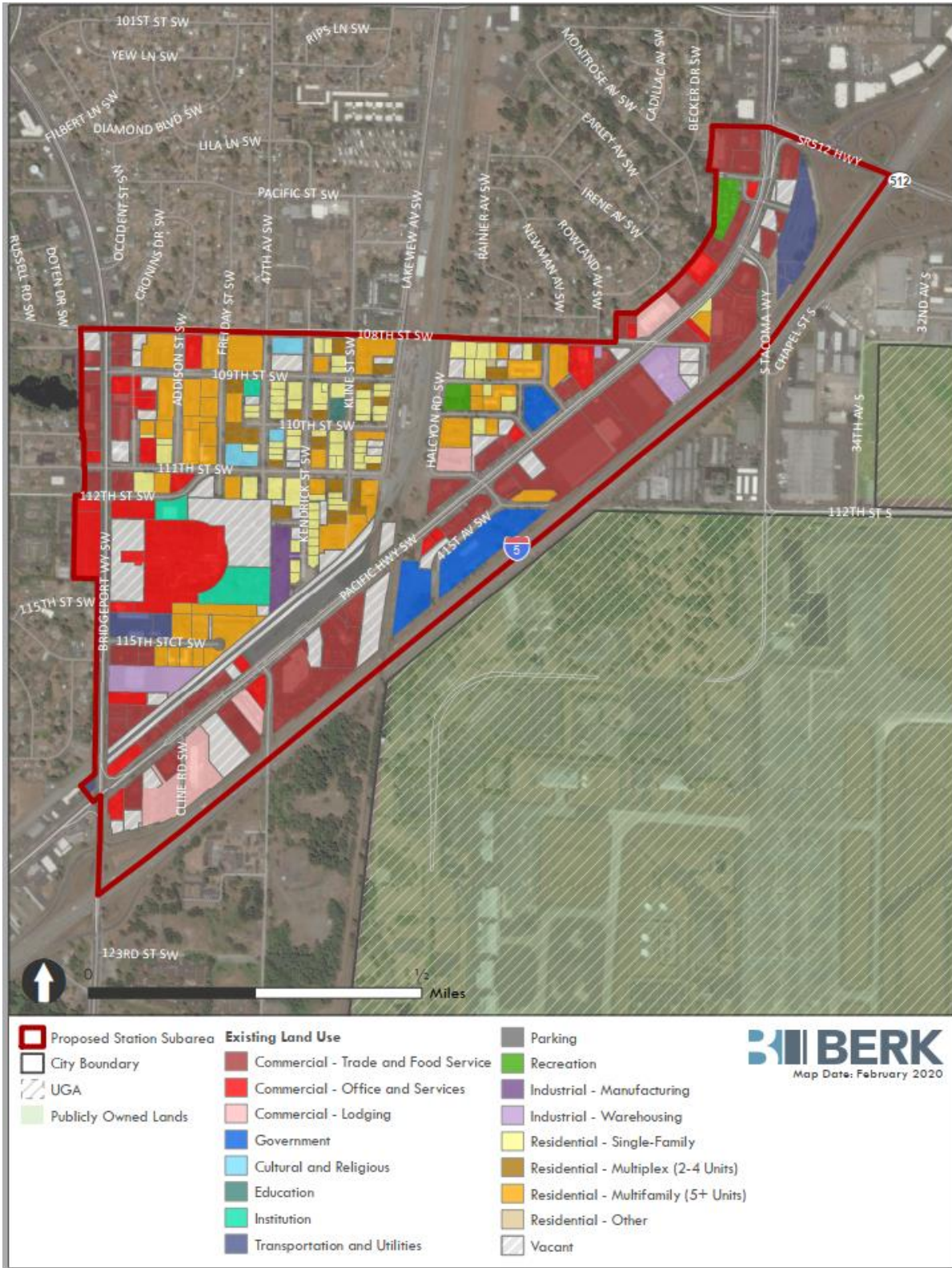
Residential development is characterized by detached single family homes (60%), attached single family (such as duplexes, and triplexes – 26%), and low rise multi-family development (14%). Mixed into these residential areas are a few churches and parks. Most of the residential structures in the study area were built before 1975, as shown in Exhibit 5.

Parcel size in the study area also displays variation, as shown in Exhibit 3. Half the parcels are a half acre or less in size, but these only account for about 40 acres in the 339 acre study area. The 13 largest parcels account for 38% of the land in the study area.

Exhibit 3. Parcels in the Study Area

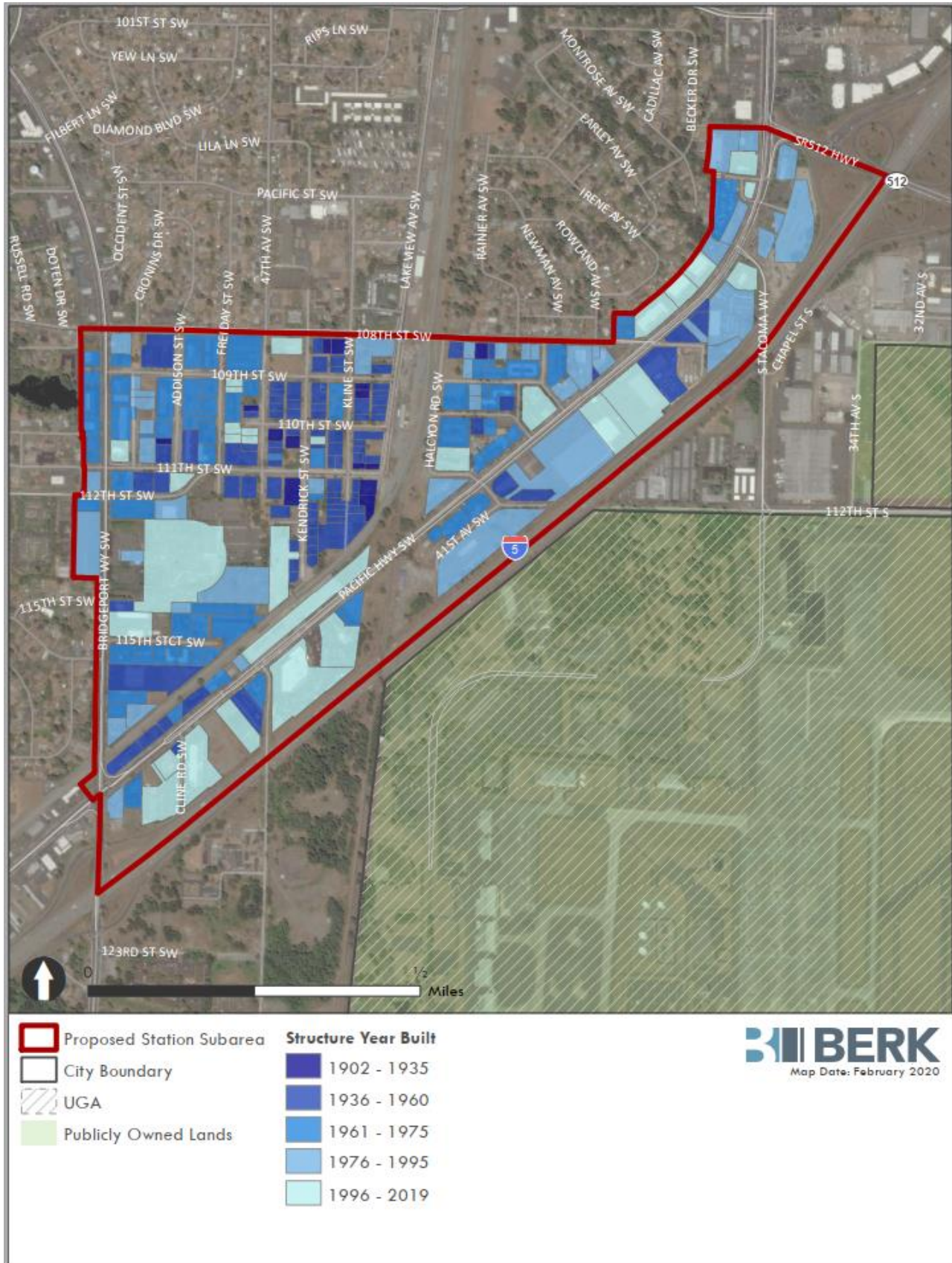
| Parcel Size | Parcel Count | Sum of Acreage |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| ½ acre or less | 169 | 40.25 |
| ½ - 1 acre | 71 | 51.37 |
| 1+ - 5 acres | 61 | 119.55 |
| Greater than 5 acres | 13 | 128.09 |
| Total | 314 | 339.26 |

Exhibit 4. Existing Land Use



Source: BERK 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

Exhibit 5. Age of Structures

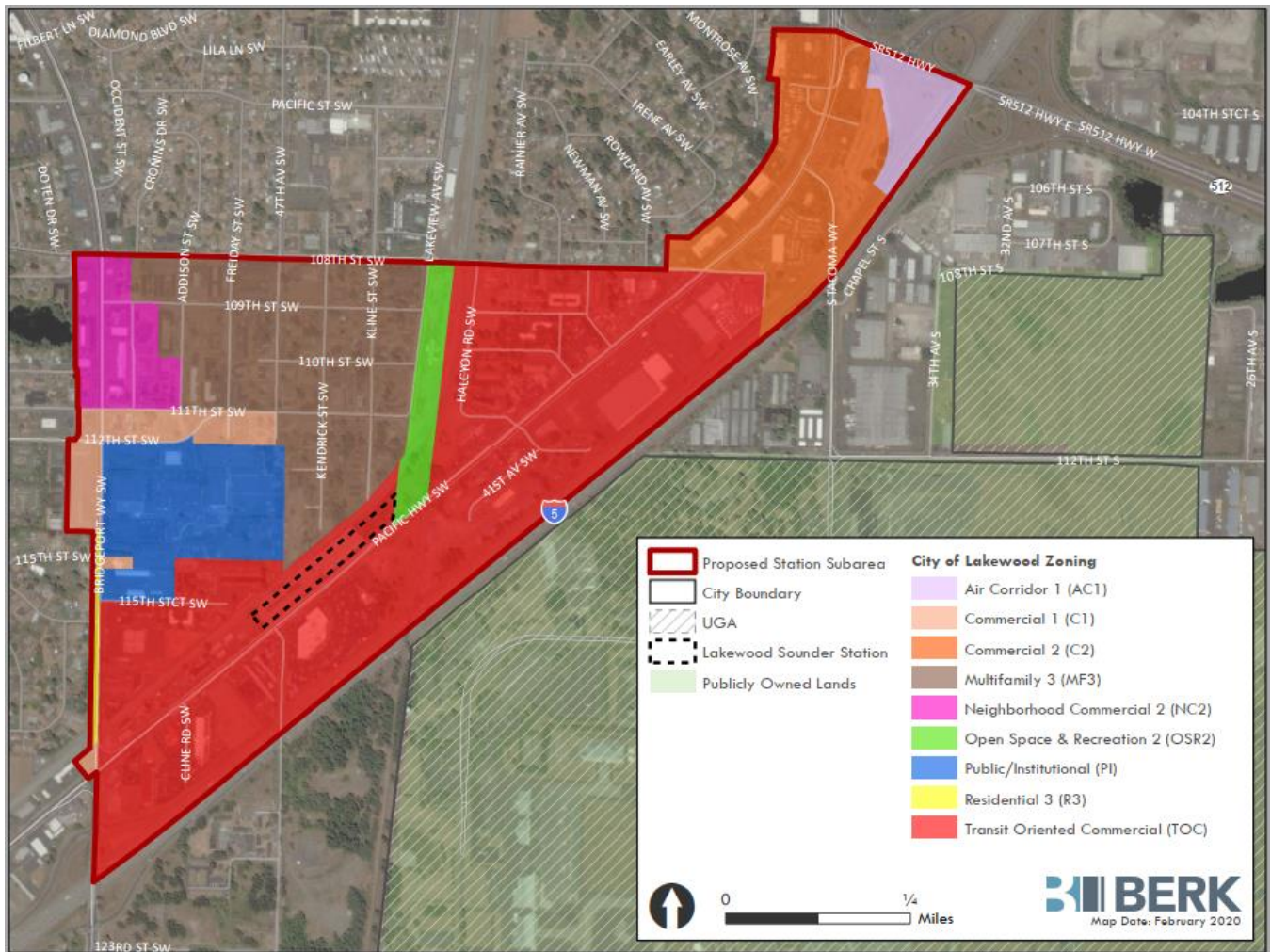


Source: BERK, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Zoning in the study area generally reflects the current use, but it also anticipates future redevelopment with designations that call for more intense land uses (Exhibit 6). A summary of the zones in the LSDS study area follows.

Exhibit 6. Zoning



Source: BERK, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

TOC - Transit Oriented Commercial

TOC zoning is shown along most of Pacific Highway in the study area and includes the Sounder Station and the proposed Lakewood Landing site. This zone is unique to the LSDS. The purpose of TOC is “an interactive mixture of uses which focus on regional transportation networks while providing for urban design, people orientation, and connectivity between uses and transportation routes.”¹ The mix of uses allowed in the TOC is very similar to those allowed in the Central Business District. They focus on retail and services,

¹ 18A.10.120D.5

prohibiting space-intensive uses like auto sales, furniture and appliance stores, or industrial uses that may cause compatibility issues in a compact urban environment such as manufacturing or recycling stations. Mixed-use and multi-family residential uses are allowed at densities up to 54 units per acre.

C1 - Commercial One and C2 - Commercial Two

C1 and C2 are commercial corridor districts that incorporate employment, shopping, services, offices, and light industrial uses near major arterials. A small strip of C1 is located north of the hospital, just off Bridgeport Way. Along Pacific Highway near the intersection of SR 512 is an area of C2. Both districts allow a range of businesses as permitted uses. Hotels and motels are allowed in both districts, permitted in C2, but a conditional use in C1. Commercial recreation, heavy manufacturing, shopping centers, and recycling and transfer stations characterize the type of uses that are prohibited. Residential uses are not allowed, except for allowing a caretaker's unit.

NC2 - Neighborhood Commercial Two

The commercial area on Bridgeport is zoned NC2 with the intent to create a sense of urban community that serves surrounding neighborhoods that may also attract people from other areas. This zone allows a mix of residential, retail, office, and services. Residential may be multi-family or mixed-use development up to 35 units per acre. Permitted commercial uses tend to be small or midsized. Most light industrial and larger commercial uses are prohibited. The few that may be considered, such as auto sales or breweries, are conditional uses to help mitigate for impacts and ensure district and neighborhood compatibility.

MF3 - Multi Family Three

The existing residential area of attached and detached single family homes and low rise multi-family is zoned MF3. MF3 zoning is located in areas where there is both an arterial and a nearby commercial or mixed-use district. This is intended to be a high density multi-family environment with multi-story housing with densities up to 54 units per acre. Where multi-family development occurs within the LSDS, ground floor commercial use is allowed.² Attached and detached single-family uses are not allowed, which means that most of the existing uses are non-conforming. Non-conforming structures may be maintained but not altered or enlarged.³

PI - Public/ Institutional

This zone recognizes the site of Saint Clare hospital, which is a major institution serving all of Lakewood and beyond.

OSR2 - Open Space & Recreational Two

OSR2 provides for open spaces and recreational activities and is specifically intended for areas of active recreational uses. This zone is applied to a small strip of land that would extend from the south end of Lakeview Avenue SW to Pacific Highway. Allowed uses include electrical, communication, and utility transmission lines, cables, and antennas as well as community gardens, passive recreation, sports fields, and protected open space. Parks, playgrounds, community or senior centers, and outdoor recreation are allowed with a conditional use permit.

² 18A.40.040B.1

³ 18A.20.200

JBLM Zoning and Land Use Compatibility

All of Lakewood, including the study area, is within the Lakewood Military Coordination & Notice Area (MCNA).⁴ Jurisdictions within the MCNA coordinate with JBLM prior to the approval of zoning and Comprehensive Plan amendments. Current zoning has already been subject to MCNA review, but the City notifies JBLM of all land use and building permits, subdivisions, and site plans to provide opportunity for comment.

Parts of Lakewood are also subject to airport compatible land use restrictions. The study area is not within the most restrictive aircraft safety zones, but is within the Inner Horizontal Surface imaginary surface area for the safe operation of aircraft around JBLM.⁵ JBLM reviews proposed development to determine if the use is prohibited or could interfere with pilot vision, communication, radar, or other elements of safe operation. Typically, uses that produce steam, dust, glare that may impair visual operation, or those that attract birds, are prohibited.

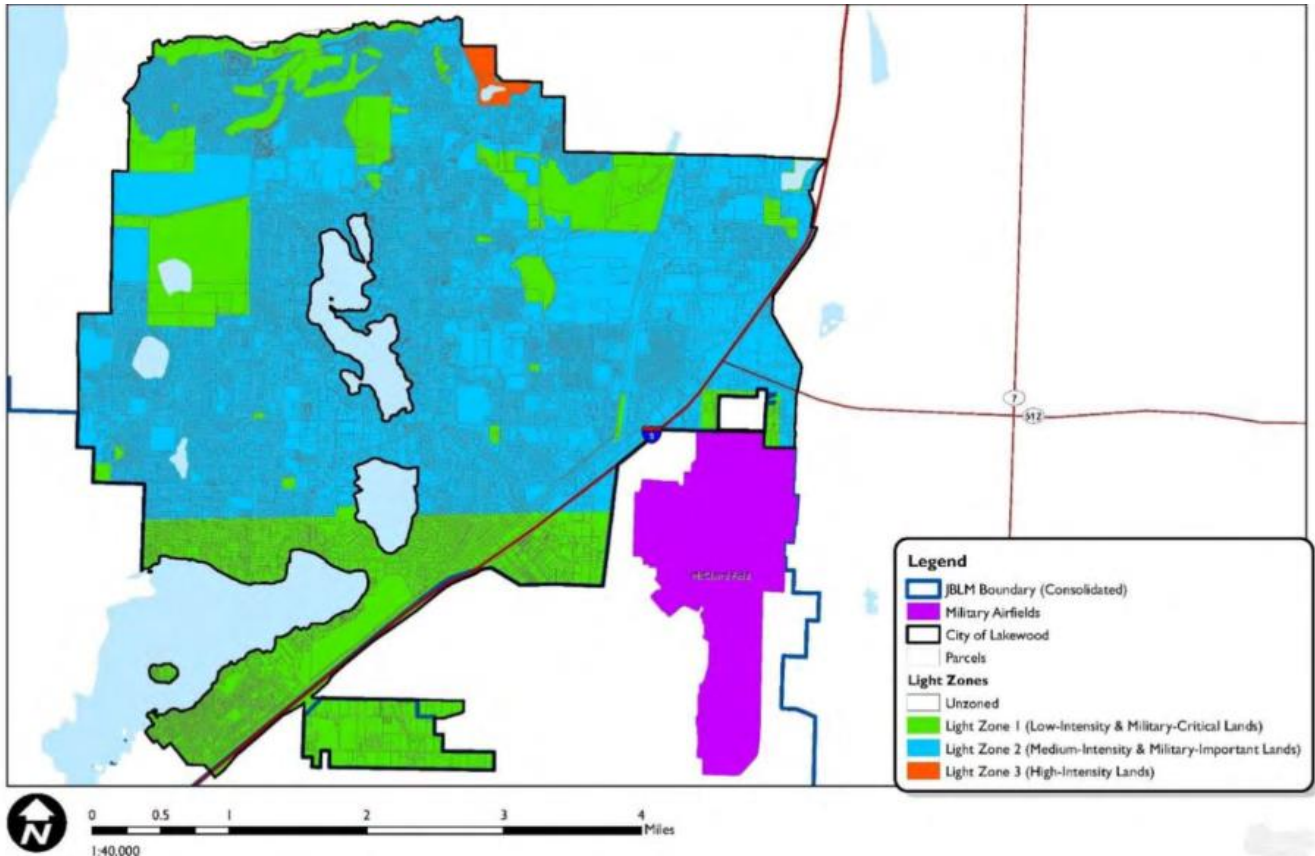
The study area is also subject to lighting standards and requirements to prevent interference with aircraft operation at JBLM.⁶ The northern portion of the study area, near the interchange with SR-512 is part of Light Zone 2 and the rest of the study area is in Light Zone 1 (Exhibit 7). Light Zone 1 is applicable to low-intensity land uses with low levels of exterior lighting at night. Light Zone 2 applies to medium intensity uses with model levels of exterior lighting such as residential, mixed-use, and commercial areas. Lighting standards are also intended to reduce light pollution, conserve energy, and provide safety and security. Generally, the code requires lighting to be shielded to prevent light shining above the luminary and to prevent light spill over on to adjacent properties.

⁴ 18A.10.135.6

⁵ 18A.10.135.10B

⁶ 18A.60.095

Exhibit 7. Lakewood Light Zones



Source: Lakewood Municipal Code, 18A.60.095

Design and Landscaping Standards

Lakewood requires compliance with community design standards for all new development except single-family units.⁷ Performance-oriented standards for site planning, buildings, landscaping, and lighting are identified by either commercial, industrial, or multi-family use. Additional standards apply for large buildings, parking facilities, pedestrian weather protection, signs, the treatment of blank walls, public safety, transit facilities, development adjacent to a highway, large-scale commercial facilities, and outdoor vendors. The general commercial design objectives support the development of a pedestrian-friendly environment and people-oriented building and streetscapes that are safe, attractive, and inviting. Multi-family design standards focus on creating livable spaces that balance density with features such as open space, pedestrian connections, resident amenities, and high quality landscaping. Design features encourage scaling and variation to limit visual impacts and create safe, attractive neighborhoods.

Landscaping is required for all development and most types of redevelopment. Standards are prescriptive and identified by type of requirement: vegetative buffer, streetscape, open space, parking areas, solid barrier, and area screening. Each landscaping type is applied by zone, with consideration for adjacent uses. For example, neighborhood and commercial zones that abut multi-family zones are required to have a vegetative buffer and 10' landscape strip.

⁷ 18A.70.010 – 18A.70.050

Lakewood applies a partial form-based code to its Downtown.⁸ This code primarily regulates development standards based on type of street frontage instead of by zone or use type. Regulations cover site design, building design, frontage, landscaping, open space, and green infrastructure. Currently, this regulatory system only applies to Lakewood's Downtown subarea. However, expansion of a partial form-based code to the study area will be considered in the development of the subarea plan.

Housing Incentives

Lakewood has a housing incentives program to encourage the development of housing for people regardless of economic means.⁹ Incentives are available to support the development of rental housing in all zones that allow it.¹⁰ Those who create units affordable to households with very low incomes receive a bonus market rate unit or one and a half bonus market rates units for each unit affordable to households with extremely low incomes. Density bonuses are capped as a percentage of the base zoning district. This includes a 20% base density increase in MF3, a 15% increase in NC2, and a 25% increase in the TOC zone. Modifications in zone development standards such as coverage, parking, and height are allowed for projects participating in the housing incentives program. There is also a reduction in permitting fees.

Lakewood also has a multi-family property tax exemption, which exempts some types of new housing from paying ad valorem property taxes. The LSDS is one of the residential target areas where the exemption may be applied. The exemption is allowed for new residential development with at least four new units of multi-family or mixed-use development. Properties in which at least 20% of the multi-family units are affordable to households with low or moderate incomes receive the tax exemption for twelve years. Otherwise, eligible projects that do not include affordable housing receive eight years of tax exemption.

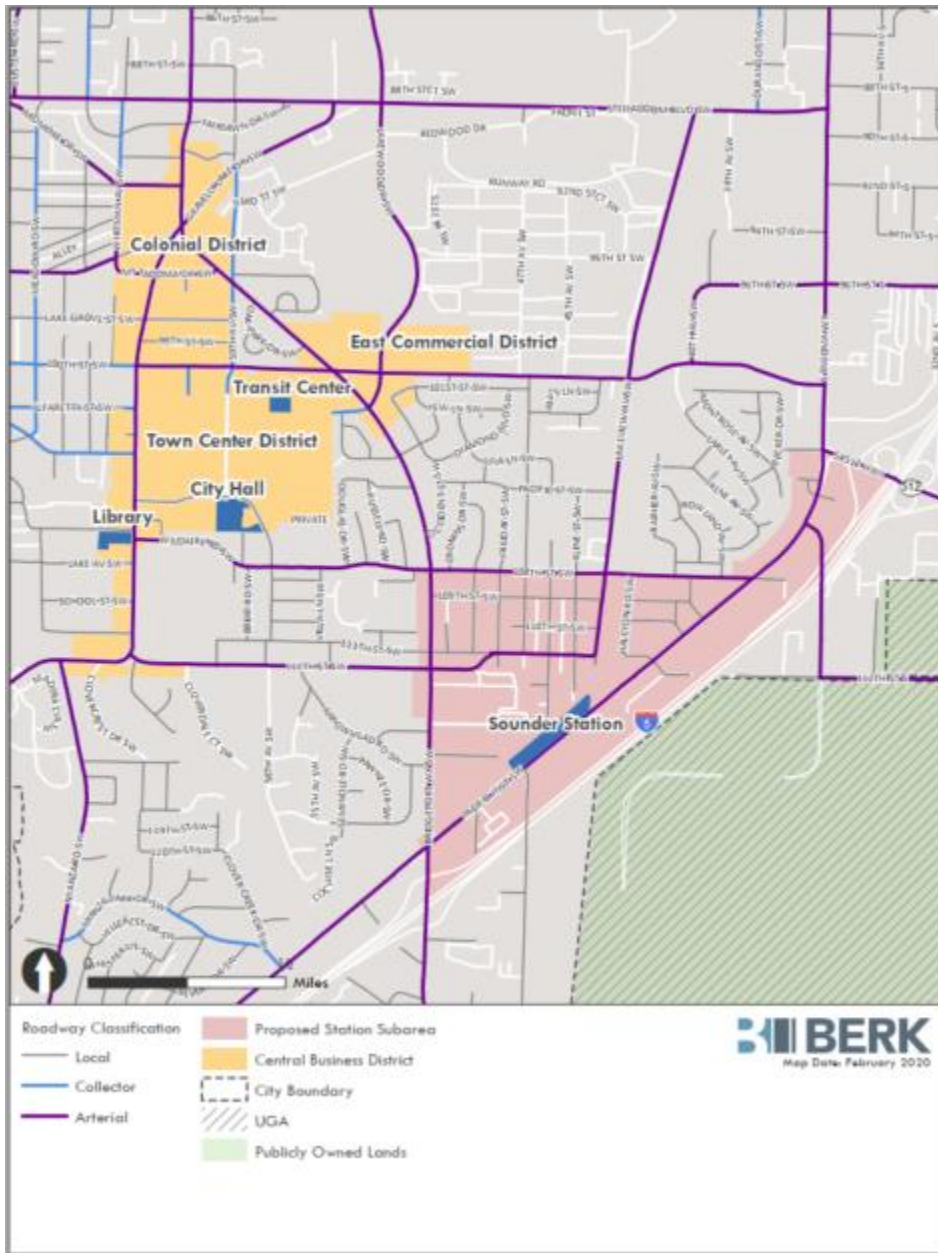
⁸ Title 18B

⁹ 18A.090

¹⁰ With the exception of the construction of one single-family dwelling on one lot. 18A.090.030.

TRANSPORTATION

Exhibit 8. Transportation Features in the Extended Study Area



Source: Fehr & Peers, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

Exhibit 8 shows transportation connections in and near the LSDS. Major roadways in the study area include Pacific Highway, 108th Street SW, and Bridgeport Way SW. These are classified as either principal or minor arterials with 35 mph posted speed limits. Pacific Highway provides a north-south connection between Tacoma and Lakewood, with access to I-5 ramps and the Lakewood Sounder station within the study area. Sound Transit and Intercity Transit provide bus service to Lakewood Station via Pacific Highway and I-5. Pierce Transit provides bus service on Bridgeport Way as well as 108th Street (Exhibit 9).

Marked bicycle lanes are located on Pacific Highway from Lakewood Station south to Gravelly Lake

Drive SW and north from Sharondale Street SW to the South Tacoma Way/SR 512 interchange. Bicycle lanes are also located on 108th Street from Bridgeport Way to Pacific Highway. Sidewalks are generally located on all major streets in the project area; no pedestrian facilities are provided in the residential area north of Pacific Highway. Pedestrian crossing of the rail tracks is limited to the Lakewood Station pedestrian walkway, Bridgeport Way, and 108th Street.

Exhibit 9. Transit in the Extended Study Area



Source: Fehr & Peers, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

Study Intersections

Within the project study area, ten intersections are proposed to be analyzed for traffic operations (Exhibit 10). These intersections are located on key roadway connections, including Pacific Highway, Bridgeport Way SW, and 108th Street SW and are most likely to be affected by potential land use changes.

Exhibit 10. Study Area Intersections

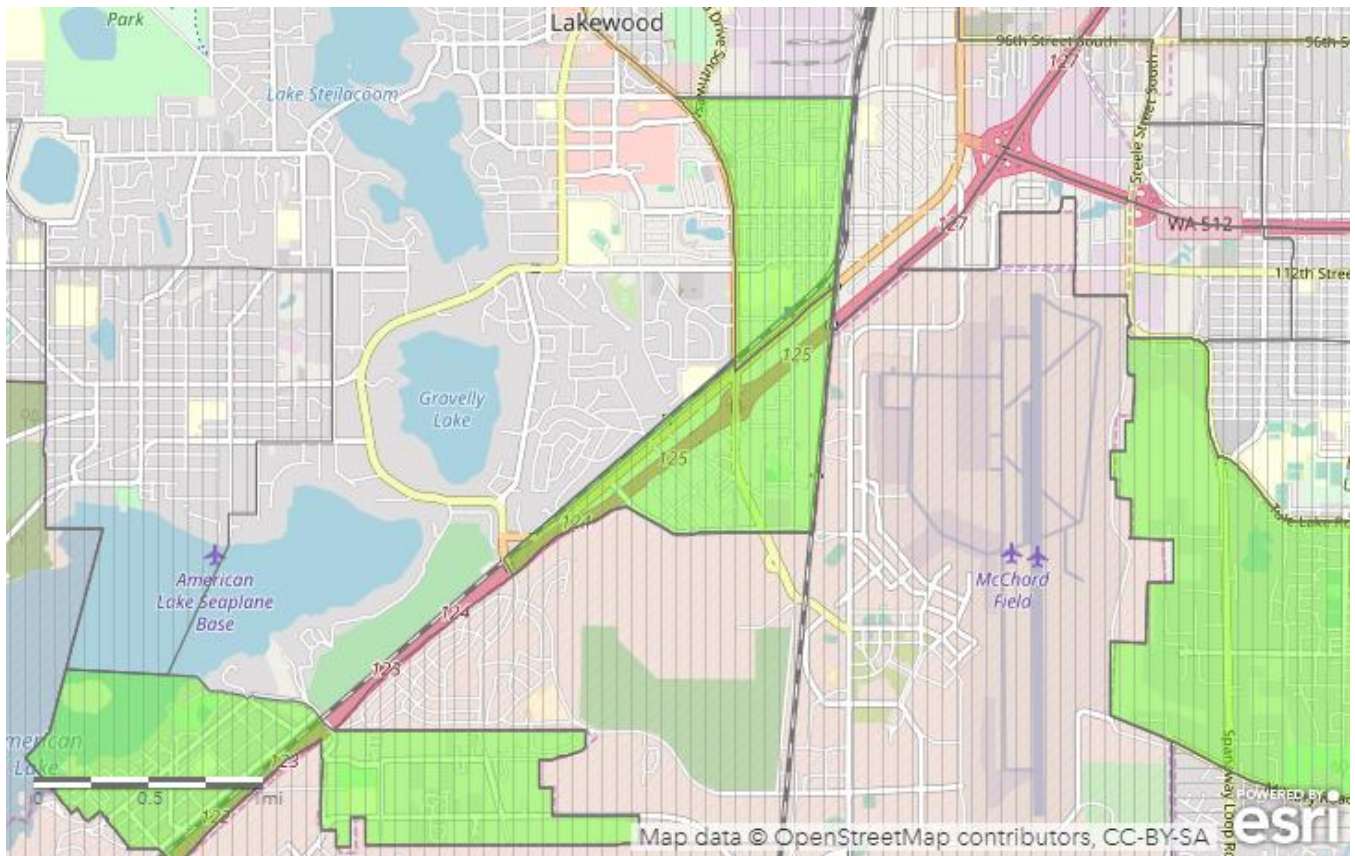


Source: Fehr & Peers, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

OPPORTUNITY ZONE

The LSDS is part of the federally designated Lakeview/Kendrick Street Opportunity Zone. The opportunity zone includes two census tracts. These tracts overlap with portions of the LSDS including the Bridgeport Way interchange with I-5, Saint Clare Hospital, the Sounder Station, the proposed Lakewood Landing site, and a portion of the residential area. Opportunity zones were created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with the intention of supporting economic development and employment in distressed communities.¹¹ The program works to allow investors to defer capital gains tax for up to nine years by investing their gains in a Qualified Opportunity Zone. The federal program is funded through 2026 supports redevelopment in the LSDS.

Exhibit 11. Lakeview/Kendrick Street Opportunity Zone



Source: Department of Commerce, 2020. Accessed on 2/21/2020 at: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/opportunity-zones/>

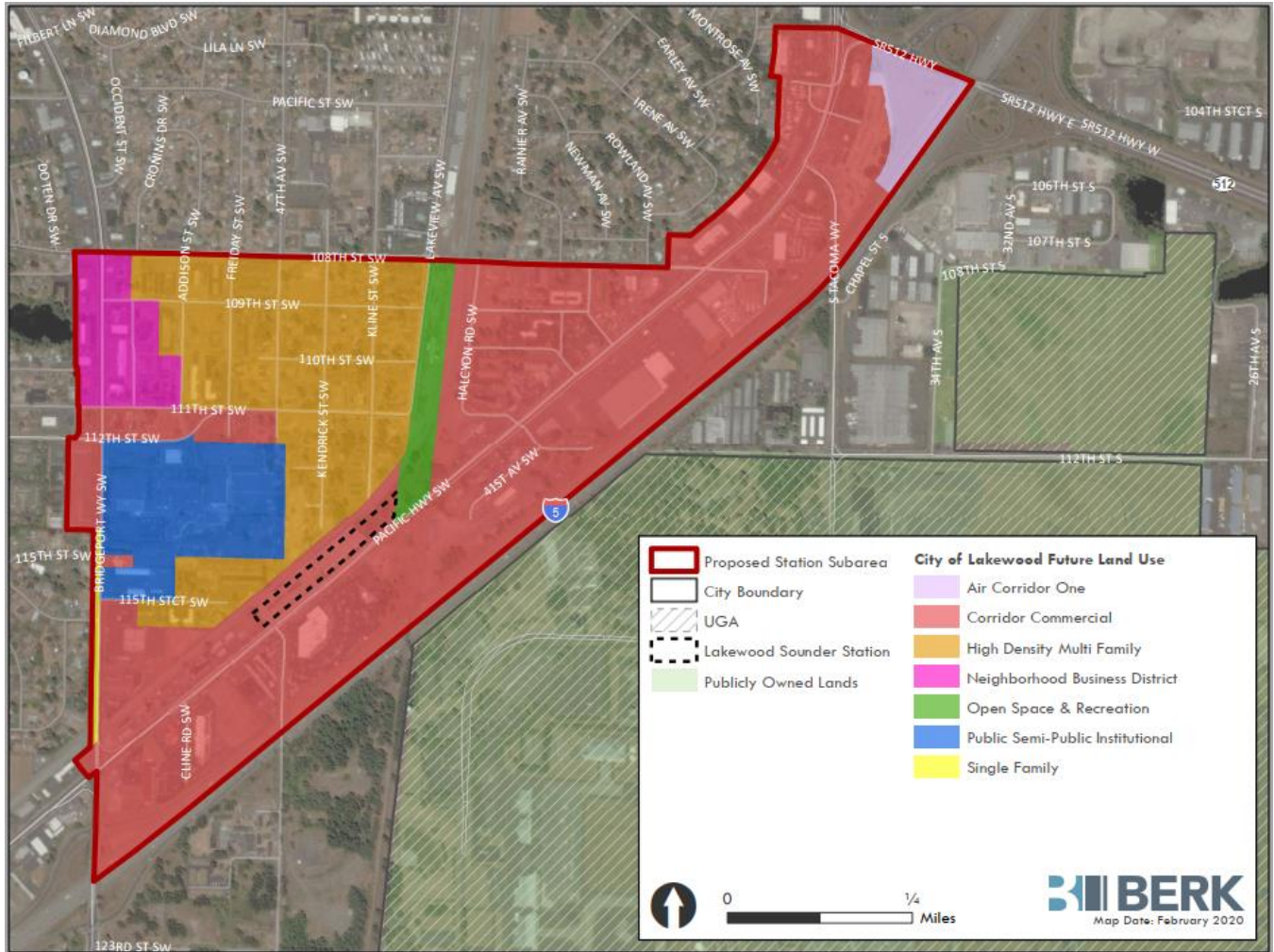
Future Plans

FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use designations are shown in Exhibit 12. They include a number of designations. Descriptions of these designations follow.

¹¹ Department of Commerce, 2020. <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/opportunity-zones/>

Exhibit 12. Future Land Use Map



Source: BERK, 2020; Pierce County Assessor, 2020.

Corridor Commercial

This land use is designated along Pacific Highway and just north of the Hospital. It is implemented by the TOC, C1, and C2 zones and recognizes Lakewood’s pattern of existing strip commercial development.

Neighborhood Business District

The NC2 commercial zoning along Bridgeport Way is in this future land use designation that allows for the transition of smaller or strip commercial business areas to transform into compact urban development over time. It allows commercial development that serves surrounding neighborhoods and beyond and allows for mixed-use residential development.

Public & Semi-Public Institutions

Saint Clare hospital is in this land use designation that recognizes essential moderate and large scale facilities that serve all of Lakewood.

High Density Multi Family

The existing residential areas zoned MF3 are in the High Density Multi Family future land use designation. The purpose of this designation is to integrate a variety of high density housing types into adopted subareas and business districts. Development regulations implementing this land use should emphasize integration of multi-family residential into the surrounding area through pedestrian connections and urban design.

Open Space & Recreation

The area of OSR2 zoning, near where Lakeview Avenue would extend to Pacific Highway, is designated as Open Space & Recreation. This designation recognizes the opportunity for future public use in this area.

Planning Policies

LAKESIDE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Development of a special district around the Lakewood Station is part of the policy framework of the Lakewood Comprehensive Plan and identified as a future community landmark.¹² Development of the LSDS is supported throughout the Comprehensive Plan and will involve engagement with both local and neighborhood groups as well as business, agency, and regional stakeholders.¹³

The LSDS is intended to be a high-density employment and residential district catalyzed by the development of the station as a multi-modal commuter hub and terminus of Sound Transit's commuter rail service.¹⁴ It is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented compact urban environment with high density residential growth and a mix of office, retail, and service uses.¹⁵ With good access and visibility from I-5 it also supports regional medical service. Transportation linkages between the LSDS and Downtown subarea will connect people to the amenities of both places and to the region.¹⁶

Section 3.3.5 of Lakewood's Comprehensive Plan focuses on the LSDS. Goal LU-25 identifies LSDS as Lakewood's multi-modal commuter hub with supporting policies that call for a transit-oriented development district, development of a subarea plan, coordination with other agencies, and the use of bonus densities and incentives to achieve this goal. A rich mix of land uses around the station is the goal of LU-26 including regional offices, major institutions, high density residential, neighborhood businesses, and open space. It also supports the citywide economic goal to promote a dynamic local economy with diverse housing stock and transportation options.¹⁷ An urban design framework to guide livable and attractive development is the focus of Goal LU-27, which include design guidelines, open spaces, and pedestrian connections.

Investment in the station and station area coupled with the development of the station as a multi-modal

¹² Comprehensive Plan section 4.4

¹³ Transparency Objective 5.4

¹⁴ Comprehensive Plan section 2.3.16

¹⁵ Policy LU-17.3

¹⁶ Comprehensive Plan section 2.4.1

¹⁷ Economic Development objectives 1.3 and 1.5.

transit hub is intended to draw private investment.¹⁸ Investments that support the hub, such as the pedestrian bridge and pedestrian amenities on Kendrick Street, improved transit access, and the park-and-ride, bring activity into this area. Strengthening and expanding nearby street grids, additional investments in pedestrian amenities and safety features, and developing convenient and safe bicycle connections will support those moving in and through the area.

Urban design is also important to ensuring a usable, attractive, and livable district.¹⁹ Both the station itself and the interchanges with I-5 are major gateways into the City that should have a distinctive image and feel that continues along Pacific Highway, Bridgeport Way, and the rest of the subarea. Public and semi-private open spaces will help to balance the intensity of land use in the LSDS, including the development of a linear park along the railway tracks. Creative design of stormwater facilities could turn a functional necessity into a landscaped amenity.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Lakewood Station is regionally important since it is the terminus of the Sounder commuter rail system that connects Seattle and Tacoma. It also is bordered by JBLM, one of the largest military installations in the country.²⁰ Development of the LSDS is consistent with regional planning policy directions from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs), as summarized below.

Vision 2050

PSRC works with its member jurisdictions in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties to develop a regional vision and multi-county planning policies (MPPs). *“The central Puget Sound region provides an exceptional quality of life and opportunity for all, connected communities, a spectacular natural environment, and an innovative, thriving economy.”*²¹ This is a sustainable future where communities make use of existing resources and transit investments, provide housing and mobility options, and provide access to good jobs as it continues to grow. Lakewood is a Core City in *Vision 2050* because of its importance as a regional transportation hub and as a civic, cultural, and employment center.²² By 2050 Lakewood and the 15 other Core Cities will accommodate 28% of regional population growth and 35% of regional employment growth by planning for new growth around transit.²³

LSDS is a prime example of a project to implement this vision of new growth near transit.²⁴ New high density housing in the LSDS will increase housing choices in Lakewood and provide living options close to transit. Future commercial development supports job opportunities for Lakewood residents and beyond due to the Sounder rail station, proximity to I-5, and the creation of a local multi-modal hub. By building the LSDS into a compact urban area, Lakewood is designing a community that promotes health, lowers household transportation costs, makes efficient use of infrastructure, and curbs greenhouse gas

¹⁸ Comprehensive Plan section 4.5.2; Goal ED-5

¹⁹ Comprehensive Plan section 4.5.2; Goal UD-9

²⁰ Comprehensive Plan section 5.3.1

²¹ PSRC. Draft Vision 2050 (December 2019), p.1.

²² Vision 2040 is the current adopted regional plan, but the draft *Vision 2050* is scheduled for adoption in spring 2020. *Vision 2050* is a well vetted draft with policy direction that is substantially similar to *Vision 2040* and once adopted, its policies will apply to the LSDS, so it was chosen for comparison for this review.

²³ PSRC. Draft Vision 2050 (December 2019), p. 35.

²⁴ PSRC. Draft Vision 2050 (December 2019), Building Urban Communities policies MPP-DP-1 through MPP-P-4.

emissions.²⁵ The LSDS will also provide better access to opportunity by providing an amenity rich local environment and helping to connect people to jobs using the regional transportation network.

Countywide Planning Policies

Jurisdictions in Pierce County also collaborate to develop CWPPs to direct future growth and development. The CWPPs are consistent with the Growth Management Act and the MPPs developed by the PSRC. This includes policies to encourage the development of high quality, compact communities and transportation facilities that support good health²⁶ as well as economic development to support employment, business retention, and business creation.²⁷ Planning for the LSDS is consistent with the direction of the CWPPs.

²⁵ PSRC. Draft Vision 2050 (December 2019), p. 77.

²⁶ Pierce County CWPP (2018). Community and Urban Design Policies, pp. 30-31 and Health and Well-Being Policies, pp. 41-43.

²⁷ Pierce County CWPP (2018). Economic and Community Development Policies, pp. 32-36.