



2019 Adopted Vision for the Lake Forest Park Town Center

Adopted October 10, 2019 by Resolution 1746

Town Center is the heart of Lake Forest Park. It is home to some of our gathering places and central to our sense of community. It is also our retail and civic core, and anticipated to have housing and be a multi-modal hub for our community's mobility needs. At the time of this drafting, the community is grappling with questions of housing density, building height and stewardship of lands that are largely in private ownership.

This challenge has been one long facing the community - dating all the way back to its incorporation. In 2004, the community went through a process to establish the current Town Center subarea plan and code. In 2016, the voters of the Puget Sound area enacted ST3, which is a Sound Transit funding initiative that will bring bus rapid transit, bus only lanes and a park and ride to Lake Forest Park. This anticipated development sparked a community effort to establish or update creek/culvert, parks, streets, highways and subarea plans for the broader Town Center area.

In 2017 through 2019, the City engaged its citizenry in stakeholder interviews, a community task force recommendation, council deliberations and direct community input to guide the development of this Vision. All of that input refined previous community efforts that described a town center as human scale and providing space to live, shop, work, gather, connect and engage - always with stewardship as a core value.

The region has validated our community's sense of center with its mobility investments and commitments in both roadways and permanent transit systems. This regional recognition and commitment, while validating, comes with the challenge and constant pressures of regional efficiency over community values.

The Tuobeda'bš native people, who originally cared for the lands that became our community, have passed to us the responsibility to care for our lands, water and creatures. As a result, our community's environmental ethic is a living practice that envelops our stewardship of the private and public lands and waters in and around Town Center.

At Town Center, our Vision is clear that the natural environment should be celebrated in the trees, lands, buildings and connections within the site as well as to/from the regional systems. At its core, Town Center and its uses are about and designed for people. And while the area is central to the region, its primary focus is on the people of Lake Forest Park.



Lake Forest Park also believes that Town Center is the hub of mobility for our residents. We recognize and respect that mobility will occur through a variety of modes - and that these modes of travel are constantly evolving. We are committed to a belief that the State Routes that trifurcate our community and bind two of three sides of our Town Center will not define this area as a pass-through community. We further believe that all forms of transit are significant (and growing) ways that the people of Lake Forest Park connect with the region around us. Complementing these trips and the uses of Town Center, facilities for pedestrians, bicycles and light-use electric mobility vehicles are central to and prioritized in, around and to/from the area.

Recognizing that Town Center as a purely commercial hub is inconsistent with the integrated vision and stewardship of Lake Forest Park. We envision people living, as well as working, transacting, engaging and connecting at and around Town Center. Housing should be in alignment and scale with the community and contribute to the stewardship of the land and waters of the area. We welcome developers as partners with the community, openly engaging in how the results of their work contribute to our vision, stewardship and sense of place.

The following future-looking statements articulate aspects of how we envision our stewardship to result in the Town Center as the heart of Lake Forest Park:

PLACEMAKING, VIBRANCY, AND PUBLIC SPACES

GOAL TC-1. The Town Center is a vital community gathering place that provides a sense of place for our residents and the region alike. Civic and public spaces have been added as part of redevelopment and improvements following adoption of this Vision. In concert with the redevelopment or improvement of Town Center, the Farmers' Market continues to be a vibrant element of the community, and Third Place Commons has been made a permanent fixture of Town Center in partnership with the City, Community and the area's primary property owner.

GOAL TC-2. The sense of place, economic vibrancy, environmental sustainability, and community uses are preserved and strengthened at the Lake Forest Park Town Center.

GOAL TC-3. Town Center (with redevelopment) has a network of useable and engaging public open space and amenity areas (parks, plazas, trails, trees, play areas, and other social and recreational areas with amenities) that are well connected to and designed to be appropriately compatible with residential and non-residential uses at the site.

GOAL TC-4. Town Center's sense of place is achieved through high quality design and development that emphasizes the Town Center's role as the place where the community gathers.

GOAL TC-5. Public art and creative expression (which could be stand-alone works or elements integrated into design) are a hallmark of the Town Center.

SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL TC-6. Town Center is a regional model of environmental stewardship that celebrates its natural environment, including through building design, art, wayfinding and ways to provide environmental awareness and education.

GOAL TC-7. Best practices in stormwater management and enhancing water quality are extremely important to the community. Town Center includes a variety of low-impact development measures, green stormwater infrastructure, enhanced tree canopy coverage, and Lyon Creek corridor enhancements which improve ecological functions and water quality in the creeks and lakeshore that surround the property.

GOAL TC-8. The tree canopy, throughout the interior of Town Center, is an important feature of the site. Town Center also features an enhanced Lyon Creek corridor, scenic views, and other natural features within and adjacent to the site as public amenities and protected as environmental resources.

MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY

GOAL TC-9. Town Center is a hub of direct, convenient pedestrian and bicycle access ways to transit and mobility services, including the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Bothell Way NE/SR 522, City bike and pedestrian paths, electric light vehicle mobility, and the Burke-Gilman Trail, as well as retail, commercial and residential uses at the site.

GOAL TC-10. Following the rigorous traffic and pedestrian safety analysis that is required to precede any redevelopment or improvement of the area, Town Center automobile, bicycle and pedestrian circulation is greatly improved over 2019 conditions. Commuters accessing park-and-ride facilities, as a result of Sound Transit investment, have adequate vehicle queuing and throughput to and from the State Routes surrounding the site, as well as safe and distinct bicycle and pedestrian routes. Commuter traffic access has been designed to minimize the use of cut-through routes in local neighborhoods.

GOAL TC-11. Town Center has safe and functional multi-modal access to all uses and locations across Town Center that connects with existing and transit services, adjacent City bike and pedestrian paths, the Burke-Gilman Trail and City parks. Internal movement of automobiles and people through Town Center have been sufficiently redesigned to both increase safety and enhance peak travel conditions.

GOAL TC-12. The City's adopted transportation plans, Safe Streets and Safe Highways, are living plans that have resulted in enhanced multi-modal access to, from, and within the Town Center.

PEDESTRIAN REALM

GOAL TC-13. While recognizing the importance and role of motor vehicles at the site, Town Center is a model for pedestrian safety and pedestrian-friendly design best practices, such as Pedestrian First tools, creating a safe, well-connected pedestrian network across the entire site that is successfully integrated with other modes.

PARKING FOR VEHICLES AND BICYCLES

GOAL TC-14. The right amount of vehicle parking (right-sized) at the site is available to adequately, and in a combined/shared manner, serve all needs, functions and uses without resulting in excess parking or in negative impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, bicycle parking is provided as necessary infrastructure to meet the community's needs for retail, commercial, civic, residential and commuter uses. It is also important to note that the site has developed to provide space for new electric light vehicle uses to be integrated with land uses and transit.

GOAL TC-15. Parking has been designed and developed in a way such that parking, particularly structured parking, is integrated with the other uses of the site and blends both with the natural environment and within the site so that it is not a visually predominant element of Town Center.

CIVIC AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

GOAL TC-16. Public services and utilities services have been proactively planned to accommodate future growth and change at the Town Center. Value is placed on the location of City Hall at Town Center. City hall is visible, accessible and well-integrated into the design of the entire site. City Hall is a model for the civic engagement, service delivery, and as a place of community pride.

MIXED LAND USES AT COMMUNITY SCALE

GOAL TC-17. Town Center is a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant mix of commercial, civic, residential uses, public open spaces, and natural areas at Town Center. Housing and other development is in alignment and scale with the community and contributes to housing availability for diverse ages and needs, as well as the stewardship of the land and waters of the area. While there are areas of the site that emphasize certain types of uses (commercial, residential, civic), the flexibility to align complementary uses has been maintained through master planning. Not only has Town Center developed with this integrated internal uses plan, but its uses are also complementary to adjacent communities and Lyon Creek.



GOAL TC-18. Town Center has become a vibrant hub of activity with land uses and community access oriented toward and taking advantage of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other shared or non-motorized trip activity of the greater community.

TOWN CENTER CHARACTER

GOAL TC-19. Town Center evokes a “Village in the Forest” experience and maintains a healthy relationship to the natural surroundings. Development at the site has recognized the value and contribution to a sense of place provided by the scenic views of Lake Washington and Mount Rainier.

GOAL TC-20. The site has unified design elements, including architectural and wayfinding features that contribute to Town Center's character and sense of place.

GOAL TC-21. The site honors and recognizes the Tuobeda’bš native people who first lived here, as well as the vision of Ole Hanson through its design, amenities and educational opportunities.

GOAL TC-22. The site has been redeveloped with the pedestrian experience at its core, including human-scale interactions, and design using high-quality, natural materials representing the Pacific Northwest character and style.