

Transportation

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER:

- A description of the existing transportation network in Tukwila;
- A discussion of how transportation planning and land use are related;
- A discussion of how demand on the transportation network is managed; and
- Goals and Policies for providing adequate levels of service.

PURPOSE

The Transportation Element establishes Tukwila’s transportation goals and policies for the 20-year planning period. It provides direction for transportation decisions regarding annual plan updates and other related transportation plans, including:

- The Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- The Six-Year Capital Improvement Program and Financial Planning Model (CIP/FPM)
- The biennial budget
- The Local Road Safety Plan (new for 2024)
- The ADA Transition Plan
- Infrastructure Design and Construction Standards

It is key in supporting community livability and economic vitality, as prioritized in Tukwila’s Strategic Plan. It also provides guidance for development review and approval, land use and zoning decisions, and continuing transportation and maintenance programs.

The Transportation Element establishes a basis for decision-making that is consistent with Washington’s Growth Management Act, King County’s Countywide Planning Policies, and the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) Vision 2050. The specific requirements of each of these plans are fulfilled by the City of Tukwila Transportation Element Background Report of the Comprehensive Plan Update (hereafter referred to in this element as the Background Report) and summarized herein. The Transportation Background Report, Local Road Safety Plan, ADA Transition Plan, Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program and Plan, Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) Plan, the annually updated six-year Transportation Improvement Plan, six-year CIP/ FPM, and the budget are all adopted by reference in the Tukwila Comprehensive Plan.

ISSUES

Tukwila is a vibrant community with diverse residents, businesses, and regional attractions, connected by various transportation options to local and regional destinations. Since incorporating in 1908, Tukwila has grown into a community with a population of 20,265 residents (2020).¹ In addition to serving its residents, Tukwila is home to jobs from a wide range of sectors, such as manufacturing, industry, local businesses, and retail. Tukwila’s major shopping area draws shoppers from across the Puget Sound region.

Tukwila’s diverse transportation system includes freeways, highways, arterial streets, local streets, bus, light rail, commuter rail transit service, Amtrak passenger rail service, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and neighborhood footpaths. In addition, Sea-Tac International Airport and Boeing Field provide air transportation for general, commercial and business aviation. The Duwamish River provides water access to Elliott Bay and beyond. The City’s road and rail network enables freight and rail transportation within and through the city. A detailed inventory of the existing transportation system in Tukwila is contained in the Background Report (Fehr & Peers, XXX, 2024).

In recent years, Tukwila has sought to address traffic congestion and improve multimodal connectivity, especially near Tukwila International Boulevard and in Southcenter. Tukwila also maintains two major regional trails: the Green River Trail and the Interurban Trail. These trails allow people to walk, roll, scooter, and bike throughout the city and to neighboring communities.

There have been several major transportation investments in the City of Tukwila, including the Tukwila International Boulevard Link Station. The station boasts high usage and provides much needed transit connections to Tukwila International Boulevard, which has undergone several pedestrian access improvements in recent years. Sound Transit is also planning to add an additional light rail infill station on the north side of the City, near Boeing Access Road. In addition to light rail service, King County Metro and Sound Transit both provide bus routes serving the Tukwila area.

This Transportation Element seeks to proactively build on these investments to support Tukwila’s continued evolution over the next 20 years. The Transportation Background Report includes the transportation project list, which was developed in coordination with the community who helped identify the long-term vision for transportation in Tukwila.

Major transportation issues facing Tukwila include:

¹ 2016-2020 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey Office. Table S0101 <https://www.census.gov/>

Note: ACS data was used for consistency among data sources within the Demographics section and Appendix A. The Decennial Census has limited data on population characteristics other than the population sum. To present a wide range of population characteristics with a consistent source, all data in the Transportation Background Report uses ACS 2020 5-year estimates.

- Physical and geographic barriers that challenge connectivity throughout the City. Physical barriers include the valley wall, the Green/Duwamish River, and highways that separate portions of the City from each other.
- Limited funding to satisfy competing priorities.
 - o Increasing connectivity is very costly given the need to acquire new rights-of-way, conducting engineering studies and design, and construction costs.
 - o Criteria for grant funding are most often targeted toward Tukwila’s Urban Center or the Manufacturing/Industrial Center because these are the locations where significant employment and residential growth are planned and are supported by regional plans.
 - o There are unmet needs in other areas of the City, including streets that do not meet City standards, and it is unlikely that the roads in these already developed areas would be improved.
 - o Inclusion of safety projects to meet the City’s safety goals to be established in the forthcoming Local Road Safety Plan will increase the need for funding sources.
 - o Implementation of a new Multi-Modal Level of Service standard will create new demands on limited funding.
 - o Reliance on state and regional agencies, such as the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Port of Seattle, Metro, and Sound Transit, to serve local needs.

Changes in Tukwila Transportation Planning

The City views the Transportation Element update as an opportunity to step back and develop a holistic vision for transportation in Tukwila. Five new goals have been developed with this update to address the changing needs in Tukwila and to incorporate the required elements established by the State of Washington and King County. The goals were developed with input from Tukwila’s residents and will guide the City of Tukwila’s future investment decisions.

The Transportation Element takes a layered network approach to focus on how Tukwila’s transportation network can function, as a system, to meet the needs of all users. In general, Tukwila has managed vehicular congestion levels throughout the entire city, but transportation includes more than just roadway capacity. This update introduces a new method of measuring how well the entire network functions, including non-motorized facilities and transit. This is called a Multi-modal Level of Service Standard, or MMLOS. The Level of Service standard for vehicles on Tukwila’s road system is not changing with this update, but new standards establishing requirements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities are added. These new standards will ensure that more than just roads are improved. Tukwila doesn’t provide transit services, but this update includes guidelines for transit that will aid in advocacy with King County Metro and Sound Transit. Details of the new MMLOS and layered network approach are included in Chapter 5 of the Transportation Background Report.

A new emphasis on safety is also included with this update. Concurrent with the development of the Transportation Element, the City is developing a new Local Road Safety

Plan (LRSP) (to be adopted in early 2025 and will be adopted by reference). The LRSP is a relatively new requirement and has dedicated federal grant funding available for project implementation.

Chapter 6 of the Transportation Background Report describes the projects and programs that support the Goals, Policies, and Transportation Vision of Tukwila. The project list has been updated to include pedestrian facilities and bike lanes as well as new safety-specific projects.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The Transportation Element supports other elements in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. It demonstrates how the City will maintain and preserve the existing network, as well as address deficiencies, while demonstrating how planned growth will be accommodated over the next 20 years.

Establishing goals and policies to guide future investments is the first step in guiding improvements to the transportation network, while implementation strategies provide specific actions to be taken to bring the planned improvements to fruition.

GOAL T-1 **Equity: Eliminate system barriers to ensure fair access to healthy, affordable, reliable transportation options, livable places, and jobs.**

Policy T-1.1 Provide a balanced transportation system that delivers circulation for all users throughout the City, including people walking, bicycling, persons who use a wheelchair or other ambulation devices, seniors, youth, people with low incomes, and residents of all ages and abilities.

Policy T-1.2 Plan and implement the transportation system utilizing urban street design principles in recognition of the link between urban design, safety, economic development, community health, and transportation system design in the planning and implementation of transportation projects.

Policy T-1.3 Consider the economic development and community benefit implications in the planning and design of transportation projects.

Policy T-1.4 Work with BNSF to mitigate impacts associated with rail and intermodal yard operations within Tukwila’s residential neighborhoods.

Policy T-1.5 Encourage transit providers, paratransit operators, and private purveyors to provide mobility for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels in the City of Tukwila and the surrounding community.

Policy T-1.6 Regularly update the City of Tukwila’s ADA Transition Plan and invest in the identified infrastructure to ensure that transportation systems serve people of all ages and abilities.

Policy T-1.7 Support efficient transit capacity to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips to, from, within, and through Tukwila.

Policy T-1.8 Prioritize investments that address systemic barriers to accessing livable places and jobs.

GOAL T-2 Safety: Provide a safe transportation system and placemaking to emphasis Tukwila as a welcoming place, particularly for historically marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Policy T-2.1 Balance travel efficiency, safety, and quality-of-life by exploring context-sensitive roadway design strategies (including appropriate vehicle lane widths, traffic calming measures, landscaping, and buffers separating vehicle traffic from other modes of travel).

Policy T-2.2 Invest in transportation projects and programs that address safety issues systematically impacting historically marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Policy T-2.3 Design streets to safely accommodate a range of motorized and non-motorized travel modes such that it is comfortable and safe to access destinations without a vehicle.

Policy T-2.4 Design intersections and sidewalks to promote pedestrian safety and foster walking (or using a bicycle, wheelchair or mobility device, scooter, or stroller) as a viable mode of transportation.

Policy T-2.5 Meet or exceed standards for pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks and crosswalks, to encourage residents and visitors to walk or roll for transportation, recreation, and improved health.

Policy T-2.6 Prioritize preserving and maintaining existing transportation facilities to avoid costly replacements and to meet public safety objectives in a cost-effective manner.

Policy T-2.7 Work with school officials and school community members to promote Safe Routes to School projects and programs and require safe routes to school improvements – such as sidewalks and crosswalks – as new development occurs along designated school walk routes.

Policy T-2.8 Partner with transit agencies to improve safety and cleanliness in and around transit stops and stations to encourage ridership.

- Policy T-2.9 Set posted speed limits to prioritize the safety of all roadway users with specific consideration given to the severity of potential conflicts (i.e., amount of potential kinetic energy transfer) between vulnerable road users (e.g., people walking, biking) and motor vehicles.
- Policy T-2.10 Seek to minimize conflicts between non-motorized modes and freight vehicles.
- Policy T-2.11 Provide well-maintained facilities. Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation to keep state facilities in Tukwila free of debris.
- Policy T-2.12 Prioritize emergency vehicle routes and access to hospitals and trauma care centers.
- Policy T-2.13 Integrate the Safe System Approach into City design guidance, standards, and related policies, and project development processes, and be consistent with industry best practice.
- Policy T-2.14 Implement safety improvements prioritized based on the occurrence of fatal and serious injury crashes, the City’s High Injury Network, and/or the presence of systemic characteristics that invoke a fatal or serious injury crash.
- Policy T-2.15 Secure funding for implementing safety strategies and long-term maintenance of improvements.
- Policy T-2.16 Strive to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries through a Safe System Approach.

GOAL 3 Connectivity: Maintain, expand, and enhance Tukwila’s multimodal network particularly walk, bike, roll, and transit to increase mobility options where needs are greatest.

- Policy T-3.1 Focus on transportation efficiency by maximizing the movement of people with streets that are designed to be safe for all transportation modes, accommodating existing land uses while designing for the future.
- Policy T-3.2 Include trucking design parameters in principal and minor arterial improvements as well as in commercial areas.
- Policy T-3.3 Allow truck traffic on all principal and minor arterials, as well as on commercial area local access streets. Consider using load limit restrictions and geofencing on residential collector arterials and residential local access streets.

- Policy T-3.4 Support goods mobility by all modes, recognizing that Tukwila is part of a regional freight distribution hub and a major international trade gateway.
- Policy T-3.5 Encourage transit-oriented uses, development patterns, and pedestrian amenities in the vicinity of high-capacity transit stations.
- Policy T-3.6 Continue to coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions and with regional and State agencies to finance and develop a multi-modal transportation system that enhances regional mobility and reinforces the countywide vision for managing growth.
- Policy T-3.7 Recommend and pursue a regional multi-modal center in conjunction with the Tukwila Commuter Rail/Amtrak Station and secondary pedestrian/bicycle/transit hubs elsewhere in the City.
- Policy T-3.8 Require all new streets, street improvements, property developments, and property improvements to provide sidewalks and other non-motorized infrastructure consistent with adopted standards and subarea plans. Property developments and improvements in commercial areas should provide direct pedestrian access from sidewalks to buildings, as well as to, from, and between parking areas.
- Policy T-3.9 Evaluate street improvement projects for the inclusion of features that support the Complete Streets policy in order to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.
- Policy T-3.10 Encourage and support public transportation services.
- Policy T-3.11 The development and extension of any light rail or commuter rail system should meet the following objectives:
- Any commuter or light rail system serving Tukwila, Seattle, South King County and/or Sea-Tac Airport should be located in a manner which promotes the coordinated short term and long-term use of alternative transportation systems, such as carpools, transit, biking and walking.
 - Such systems should allow for commuter and/ or light rail service to East King County and Southeast King County, and should be coordinated with other transit service.
 - Such systems should be located in a manner that provides multi-modal connections to Tukwila’s urban center, Manufacturing and Industrial Center, and transit centers, so as to encourage development in the manner contemplated by this Plan and the Countywide Planning Policies.
- Policy T-3.12 Collaborate with transit providers to expand transit connectivity to Tukwila South and other developing areas within Tukwila.

- Policy T-3.13 Support, encourage, and implement programs and improvements that promote transit, foot, and bicycle access to community amenities, stores, and jobs.
- Policy T-3.14 Incorporate proportionately greater neighborhood-enhancing elements in collector, minor arterial, and principle arterial design. These elements include collector lanes, wider sidewalks, separated sidewalks, and curblineline trees.
- Policy T-3.15 Continue to provide assistance to King County, King County Metro, Sound Transit, Washington State Department of Transportation, and other agencies in increasing people-carrying capacity of vehicles and reducing vehicular trips.
- Policy T-3.16 Coordinate with adjacent agencies on the development of a network of regional non-motorized transportation improvements in, through, and to Tukwila such as connected network of bicycle facilities and trails.
- Policy T-3.17 Work with King County Metro and Sound Transit to coordinate regarding bus layover space, amenities for transit riders, encourage transit use, and enhance multi-modal connections to transit.
- Policy T-3.18 Construct neighborhood links by providing additional sidewalks and trails as opportunities and development occur.
- Policy T-3.19 Pursue converting railroads and other easements to pedestrian and bicycle trails.
- Policy T-3.20 Require secure bicycle storage (i.e., racks, lockers, cages, etc.) in appropriate locations near community destinations.
- Policy T-3.21 Provide wayfinding along roads, sidewalks and trails to direct non-motorized travelers to trails and destinations.
- Policy T-3.22 Plan and budget for non-motorized transportation projects within the Tukwila Capital Improvement Program.
- Policy T-3.23 Maintain existing unimproved rights-of-way if there is a potential future opportunity to create a non-motorized connection through stairs or other trail improvements.
- Policy T-3.24 Improve transit, walking, and biking connections to the Tukwila Community Center.
- Policy T-3.25 Update the concurrency program to incorporate identified level-of-service standards for multimodal transportation.

GOAL 4 Adaptability: Anticipate and plan for the community’s evolving needs, new technologies, and opportunities for mobility.

- Policy T-4.1 Protect the transportation system (e.g., roadway, rail, transit, air, and marine) against major disruptions by developing maintenance, prevention, and recovery strategies, and by coordinating disaster response plans.

- Policy T-4.2 Maintain a partnership with King County Metro in operation and maintenance of the Tukwila Transit Center.

- Policy T-4.3. Continue to encourage the use of rideshare, transit, bicycle, and evolving technological transportation improvements.

- Policy T-4.4 Balance modal priorities on residential streets through design and maintenance that supports needs for emergency access, while still implementing strategies to slow traffic.

- Policy T-4.5 Adopt and implement multimodal LOS standards to guide City improvement and development approval decisions.

- Policy T-4.6 Prioritize transportation demand management strategies and improving nonmotorized infrastructure to preserve ~~resilient and sustainable transportation options to increase~~ system capacity (i.e., transit use, carpooling/rideshare, pedestrian and bicycle facilities) before considering. ~~After considering these priority improvements, consider~~ other street capacity improvements (i.e., signal improvements, street widening) as a last resort. ²

- Policy T-4.7 Use the Transportation Background Report – in conjunction with the Land Use Element – to prioritize construction of new sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails.

- Policy T-4.8 Advocate for Tukwila representation on the boards of King County Metro and Sound Transit in order to influence service and policies that are effective and supportive of Tukwila.

- Policy T-4.9 Advocate through verbal and written testimony to King County Metro and Sound Transit to achieve and maintain a minimum LOS C (defined by headway, vehicles per hour and hours of service), and work within Tukwila’s Transit Priority Corridor Classification System.

- Policy T-4.10 Promote emerging technology and innovative approaches to local deliveries, including cargo bikes, delivery drones, microhubs, and

² Staff recommended change 12-24

sidewalk autonomous delivery robots (SADRs) where local infrastructure supports their use.

Policy T-4.11 Address spillover parking (onto private property, public property, or public streets) near transit facilities and other community destinations, balancing competing land use needs and opportunities.

Policy T-4.12 Coordinate with local stakeholders to address truck parking needs.

GOAL 5 Environment: Plan, design, and construct transportation projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve community health, and protect the natural environment.

Policy T-5.1 Collaborate with King County, the Port of Seattle, and BNSF to ensure that King County International Airport, SeaTac International Airport, and BNSF railway operations and development:

- o Enhance Tukwila goals and policies;
- o Incorporate Tukwila land use plans and regulations;
- o Minimize adverse impacts to Tukwila residents; and
- o Are not encroached upon by incompatible land uses.

Policy T-5.2 Support Tukwila employers providing Commute Trip Reduction Program (CTR) services to workers to reduce drive-alone trips, vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy T-5.3 The City of Tukwila will pursue investing in transit benefits and education to set an example to other employers by a commitment to reducing drive-alone trips, vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy T-5.4 Design and operate transportation facilities in a manner that is compatible with and integrated into the natural and built environments in which they are located. Incorporate features such as natural drainage, native plantings, and local design themes that facilitate integration and compatibility.

Policy T-5.5 Support car-share, bike-share, and other alternatives to individual automobile ownership, to enhance sustainability.

Policy T-5.6 Support, encourage, and implement transportation programs and improvements that promote water quality and regional air quality.

Policy T-5.7 Preserve and enhance the urban tree canopy to provide shade, improve air quality, and enhance placemaking by including vegetation wherever feasible.

- Policy T-5.8 Support and encourage the development of infrastructure that minimize reliance on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as electric and high fuel efficiency automobiles.
- Policy T-5.9 Establish mode-split goals for all significant employment centers which will vary according to development densities, access to transportation service, and levels of congestion.
- Policy T-5.10 Support transportation system improvements and programs that encourage transit use, high-occupancy vehicle trips, and non-motorized transportation to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions.

RELATED INFORMATION

Transportation Background Report
Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program and Plan
Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) Plan
Local Road Safety Plan (adoption planned for 2025)