

# CHAPTER 3

## LAND USE

### **Introduction**

Land use planning enables the City of Auburn to manage its anticipated growth and development while taking into consideration the specific community vision and desires. By designating how land can be used, those considerations necessary for orderly growth including the creation of jobs, the provision of recreational opportunities, strong and stable neighborhoods and an efficient transportation system can be pursued.

### **Auburn Today**

To better understand and evaluate the context for the City's future growth, it is helpful to evaluate the City's existing land use and zoning.

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the zoned acreage within the City of Auburn and the percentage that acreage represents of the City's overall land area. Land zoned for residential purposes, especially single family residential, is clearly predominant and represents about 49 percent (RC, R1, R5, R7 and R10 zones) of the City's zoned acreage. Of commercial and industrial zoned land, the M1 (Light Industrial) zone is most predominant, consisting of 9 percent of the zoned acreage in the city. Land zoned P1 (Public Use District) is another significant land use zone consisting of 8.5 percent of the city's zoned acreage.

**Figure 3.1**  
**City of Auburn**  
**Acreege of Land by Zoning District**

ZONE	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE OF CITY
RC (Residential Conservancy)	1,481	7.58%
R1 (Residential 1 du/acre)	1,405	7.19%
R5 (Residential 5 du/acre)	4,281	21.92%
R7 (Residential 7 du/acre)	2,076	10.63%
R10 (Residential 10 du/acre)	244	1.25%
R20 (Residential 20 du/acre))	608	3.13%
RMHC (Residential Manufactured/Mobile Home Units)	455	2.33%
RO (Residential Office)	95	0.49%
RO-H (Residential Office Hospital)	1.0	0.005%
CN (Neighborhood Commercial)	12	0.06%
C1 (Light Commercial)	302	1.55%
C2 (Central Business District)	33	0.17%
DUC (Downtown Urban Center)	135	0.69%
C3 (Heavy Commercial)	1,432	7.33%
BP (Business Park)	0	0.00%
EP (Environmental Park)	276	1.41%
M1 (Light Industrial)	1,762	9.02%
M2 (Heavy Industrial)	1,099	5.63%
LF (Landing Field)	112	0.57%
P1 (Public Use District)	1,665	8.47%
I (Institutional)	584	2.99%
U (Unclassified)	432	2.21%
PUD (Planned Unit Development)	984	5.04%
TV (Terrace View)	59	0.30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,533</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: City of Auburn. Geographic Information Services (GIS)

The above data includes area in the West Hill and Lea Hill annexations. The small remaining areas outside of the city limits but within the city's Potential Annexation Area (PAA) are not included.

### **BUILDABLE LANDS - LAND SUPPLY AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY**

In 1997 the Washington State legislature adopted a Buildable Lands amendment to the Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A.215). The amendment requires certain Washington State counties and their cities

to determine the amount of land suitable for urban development and to evaluate their capacity for growth based on past development history.

Both Pierce and King Counties are subject to the State Buildable Lands requirement. In addition, both counties use the Buildable Lands effort to assist in the allocation of population/housing unit/employment targets to individual jurisdictions within the respective counties as required by the GMA. The first buildable lands reports were based upon data through 2002; the second reports, published in 2007, are current through 2005.

The Buildable Lands analysis involves the identification of vacant and redevelopable land suitable for development over the planning horizon, through 2022. Land suitability takes into consideration estimates of how critical areas, land that might be needed for public purposes (e.g. parks, storm drainage), and land needed for future streets will effect development of these vacant and redevelopable parcels. It also means adjusting the amount of vacant and redevelopable land using a market factor or discount factor to exclude land that, based on historical trends is not reasonably expected to become available for sale or lease during the planning horizon.

#### **Land Supply and Housing Unit Capacity**

As indicated above, both King and Pierce Counties are subject to the State's Buildable Lands legislation. An approximation of Auburn's development capacity was made through an analysis of all vacant and underutilized land within the City. Vacant land is defined as any parcel with no structures. Underutilized or redevelopable land is defined as a parcel with potential for infill or redevelopment.

The following summarizes the results and conclusions of these analyses by county (King and Pierce). While the objective behind each counties' Buildable Lands effort was similar, the approaches were slightly different. Detailed information regarding the Buildable Lands analysis may be found in the individual Buildable Lands reports prepared by the respective County.

#### **2007 King County Buildable Lands Analysis**

Figure 3.2 identifies the gross and adjusted net vacant and redevelopable land by residential land use type from the Buildable Lands analysis for King County. Adjusted net acres represent the amount of gross acres available for development after assumptions about critical areas, future right of way needs; future land for public uses and the market factor have been considered. (Note: this analysis was based upon the City limits as of December 31, 2005 and therefore does not include the recent annexations of Lea and West Hills. The 2007 King County Buildable Lands Report did

not provide specific analysis for the large Lea Hill and West Hill PAAs that in 2005, were still unincorporated).

**Figure 3.2**  
**Gross and Adjusted Net Acres of Vacant and Redevelopable Land by Residential Zoning Type (King County)**

	<b>Gross Acres</b>	<b>Adjusted Net Acres (1)</b>
Single Family Vacant	1,323.5	888.2
Single Family Redevelopable	603.7	349
Multi-Family/ Mixed Use Vacant	37	32.5
Multi-Family/ Mixed Use Redevelopable	145.8	107.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,110</b>	<b>1,377.6</b>

- (1) "Adjusted Net Acres" represents land available for development after critical areas, anticipated right-of-way and public purposes needs and a market factor have been taken into account.
- (2) "Other" represents mixed-use opportunities in certain zones.

After deducting for constraints, future right-of-way and public purpose needs, and after applying a market factor, the Buildable Lands analysis shows that Auburn has approximately 1,377.5 adjusted net acres of vacant and redevelopable residentially zoned land during the planning period through 2022. As seen in Figure 3.2, the majority of available land for development is zoned for single-family residential purposes.

Based on the residential land supply analysis and historical densities, an estimate of housing unit capacity was developed. Figure 3.3 identifies the estimated capacity (in housing units) in King County by the predominant zoning type. This estimate shows a capacity of approximately 6,525 housing units in the King County portion of the City exists to the year 2022.

**Figure 3.3**  
**Housing Unit Capacity By Residential Zoning Type (King County)**

	<b>Capacity (Housing Units)</b>
Single Family	3,958
Multi-Family	2,002
Mixed Use	565
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,525</b>

(1) Capacity figures include units in the pipeline.

### **Employment Capacity (King County)**

As part of the King County Buildable Lands analysis, employment capacity was also estimated. This methodology involved a similar approach as the residential capacity analysis. The supply of both vacant and redevelopable commercial and industrial land was determined. As with residential capacity, net land supply for commercial and industrial purposes took into consideration critical areas, anticipated future right-of ways, land for public purposes and applied a market factor to land that may not be available for development during the planning period.

Estimates of how much commercial and industrial square footage could be developed on property were calculated. Employment capacity was developed applying a floor area per employee ratio.

Figure 3.4 identifies the gross and adjusted net vacant and redevelopable land by commercial and industrial land use from the King County Buildable Lands analysis. Again, adjusted net acres represents the amount of gross acres available for development after assumptions about critical areas constraints, future right of way needs, land for public uses and the market factor have been considered.

**Figure 3.4**  
**Gross and Adjusted Net Acres of Commercial and Industrial**  
**Land Supply (King County)**

	<b>Gross Acres</b>	<b>Adjusted Net Acres (1)</b>
Commercial Vacant	164	136.1
Commercial Redevelopable	81.8	66
Industrial Vacant	499.3	327.3
Industrial Redevelopable	256.9	176.3
Mixed Use Vacant	2	1.6
Mixed Use Redevelopable	56.4	45.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,060.2</b>	<b>753</b>

1. "Adjusted Net Acres" represents land after critical areas, future anticipated streets, land for public purposes and market factor have been considered.

Figure 3.4 indicates that approximately 1,060 gross acres of vacant and redevelopable commercial, industrial and mixed use zoned land exists, with most of this land being industrially zoned. Adjusted for constraints, future infrastructure needs and a market factor, slightly more than 750 net acres exists.

Figure 3.5 below summarizes employment capacity developed as part of the Buildable Lands analysis by land use zone type. It shows that the City of Auburn has employment capacity for over 17,750 jobs, with a majority of those jobs being on industrially zoned land.

**Figure 3.5**  
**Employment Capacity by Zoning Type (King County)**

<b>Zone Type</b>	<b>Employment Capacity</b>
Commercial	3,559
Industrial	12,053
Mixed Use	736
Other (1)	1,410
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,759</b>

(1) "Other" includes estimates of employment associated with pipeline projects identified at the time of the Buildable Lands analysis.

### **Pierce County Buildable Lands Analysis**

While the overall objective of the Pierce County Buildable Lands analysis was similar to King County's, certain elements were done differently. The

majority of land within the city limits at the time of the buildable lands analysis (Year 2005) was part of the Lakeland Hills South Planned Unit Development (PUD). The majority of the additional residential vacant land was part of approved preliminary plats. Therefore, estimates of residential population housing units were based on planned densities established as part of the PUD approval and a related annexation agreement with the developer, and also took in account the other approved projects. Estimates of employment were based on known employment areas within the PUD.

Based on the Pierce County Buildable Lands analysis, it was determined that the City of Auburn’s population growth to the year 2022 would be 10,500 people. This translates into the need for approximately 1,789 housing units.

The Pierce County Buildable Lands analysis includes a 2022 employment target of 403 and an employment capacity of 543. This estimate was based on the likely employment generated by the commercial parcels located within Lakeland Hills South PUD and other vacant commercial lands along A St. SE.

(Specifics regarding the Pierce County Buildable Lands analysis may be found in the “Pierce County Buildable Land Reports – A Monitoring and Evaluation analysis of Urban Growth and Development Capacity for Pierce County and its Cities and Towns”, September 1, 2007.)

**Evaluation of Capacity Against Projected Growth -Targets**

King County and Pierce County both have allocated housing unit and employment targets to local jurisdictions. These targets were recently updated with the revised population forecasts released by the Office of Financial Management for each county. The City of Auburn’s allocation targets are presented below in Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.6  
City of Auburn 2006-2031 Housing Unit/Employment/Population  
Allocations (King and Pierce counties)**

	Housing Units	Employment	Population
<b>King County</b>	9,620	19,350	N/A
<b>Pierce County</b>	386	206	7,950

These revised housing and employment target numbers were updated to assist jurisdictions in their comprehensive plan updates as well as coincide with the updates to the Countywide Planning Policies. An updated buildable lands report will not be completed until 2012 and at that time the

City will be able to determine its housing and employment capacity and whether land use changes are warranted.

**Buildable Lands Analysis Limitations**

It is important to note limitations to the Buildable Lands analysis. The Buildable Lands analysis is based on identifying actual densities for a five-year period and then applying these densities to available land. Whether or not the densities achieved for the discrete five-year period will be a true reflection of future densities is one consideration. As land becomes increasingly scarce and land values rise, there will be a tendency for land to be more intensely used over time with higher densities.

Also, how much land could be developed is not a predictor of whether it will be developed. Ultimately the market will dictate how much land will be developed. Attempting to predict the market was beyond the scope of the Buildable Lands analysis.

**Issues and Background**

**Auburn's Potential  
Annexation Area**

Auburn's Comprehensive Plan contains policies which designate types and intensities of land uses that will accomplish the City's long range goals. Since the Plan depicts a long term perspective of the City's growth, it is appropriate to also include on the Comprehensive Plan map those areas which may not currently be within the City limits, but are planned to be in the future. These areas are within the city's potential annexation area (PAA). (Map I.1). However, due to recent annexations, the amount of land remaining within the PAA is relatively small.

The city provides water and sewer service to many portions of the PAA. In addition, growth in the PAA can have significant impacts on other City services. Hence, it is important for City decision makers to consider the growth in these areas as well as within the city limits when making decisions concerning capital projects such as water and sewer extensions and road projects. (For a more thorough discussion of these issues; see Chapter 13, "Development in the Unincorporated Areas and Annexation.")

**GOAL 5.**

**CITY EXPANSION AND ANNEXATION**

To ensure the orderly development and annexation of the City's potential annexation area in a manner that ensures adequate and cost-effective provision of required urban services and facilities, reduces sprawl, implements the goals, objectives and policies of the Auburn Comprehensive Plan, and protects designated rural areas.



Objective 5.1 To designate Auburn's potential annexation area and to include those areas on the City's Comprehensive Plan Map.

Policies:

LU-1 Auburn's Potential Annexation Area is shown on Map 3.1. Map 3.1 also depicts Growth Impact Areas. These Growth Impact Areas are generally adjacent cities or unincorporated County lands in which development that occurs potentially impacts the city of Auburn.

LU-2 The Auburn City Council may revise the boundaries of the Potential Annexation Area in the future, in response to:

- a. Amendments to the King County Urban Growth Area as specified in the King County Countywide Policies;
- b. Discussions between Auburn and adjacent jurisdictions regarding Potential Annexation Area boundaries;
- c. Discussions with Pierce County concerning the designation of Potential Annexation Area boundaries; or
- d. Changed circumstances relating to population and employment growth and projections, urban service feasibility, or similar factors.

### Urban Form

Planning deals with the basic geographic form of the city. Auburn's existing form separates the city into two parts: a concentration of employment base on the west with sufficient existing and potential jobs to be of regional significance (region serving area), and residential and locally oriented business uses to the east (community serving area). This existing policy of a "split" form has generally been effective in avoiding gross land use conflicts between residential uses and more intensive (e.g. industrial) land uses. This Plan's policies maintain this basic split policy. However, Auburn's downtown area is also treated as a unique (both region and community-serving) part of the city's form.

Another aspect of a city's form is its development intensity. Varying intensities of development require different configurations of city services and facilities and create different community impacts. The location of different intensities can also assist in establishing the city's character and identity, and can be instrumental in furthering other important goals (protection of critical areas, protection against natural hazards, etc.).

Policy established by the 1969 Comprehensive Plan assumed that the city would eventually be completely urban in character and the City's approach to developing its service delivery system was driven by this assumption. At that time no City policy or program addressed agricultural preservation. While extensive areas with rural development require expensive restructuring of the City service delivery system, strategic long-term protection of some of these areas can assist in limiting urban sprawl, maintaining diversity of living environments, and protecting important environmental resources, in particular the City's water source at Coal Creek Springs. This Plan designates a limited amount of Residential Conservancy area for this purpose, which should not significantly affect the overall cost of city services.

**GOAL 6. URBAN FORM**

To establish an orderly urban form which separates uses on the basis of their functional relationship to the community, and which reinforces the identity of the community.

Objective 6.1. To physically separate region serving employment centers and other regionally oriented land uses from areas that are residential or local in character while ensuring that regional facilities strengthen the community as a whole and enhance downtown Auburn.

Policies:

LU-3 Areas on the valley floor which are suitable to support large scale economic development projects should be reserved, for the most part, for uses which support Auburn's role as a regional employment and commercial center (to be known as the Region Serving Area -- See Map 3.2).

LU-4 Areas delineated on the Urban Form Map (Map 3.2) as the Community Serving Area should be reserved for uses which are local in character or serve local markets.

LU-5 Link together regionally significant land uses such as the SuperMall, Green River Community College, Boeing, Emerald Downs, and commercial uses on Auburn Way in a manner that enhances the regional stature of Auburn while providing services, employment and tax base for the community. Linkages should be designed to enhance Downtown Auburn as the community's focal point.

Objective 6.2. Maintain downtown as an area that uniquely serves both regional and community needs.

## Policies:

- LU-6 The downtown urban center shall be the focal point of the Auburn community. It should include a mix of uses including, but not limited to, government and civic uses, retail, residential and services that are appropriate to fill that role.
- LU-6A Focus growth and development in the Auburn Downtown urban center to support economic development, complement transit oriented development, direct growth pressures away from single family residential neighborhoods, and implement regional growth management strategies.

Objective 6.3. To protect community identity while promoting diversity and conserving rural amenities, by designating rural areas along the city's periphery and in areas with significant environmental values.

## Policies:

- LU-7 The City shall support the County agricultural program in securing the development rights to strategically located parcels, especially along the northern city boundary and at the start of the Upper Green River Valley.
- LU-8 The City should limit accessible City utility systems into the Upper Green Valley, and shall limit density, thus preserving the character of the area and encouraging continued cultivation on these properties.
- LU-9 The City shall protect Coal Creek Springs by: 1) limiting density to less than one residential unit per four acres within the area tributary to the Coal Creek Springs Watershed and by 2) designating a Special Planning Area for the Mt. Rainier Vista site.
- LU-10 The City shall support low density County zoning adjacent to the city on the Enumclaw Plateau Agricultural District and will not extend City sewer and water facilities into the area if it will promote urban development.
- LU-11 The City shall consider the impacts of new development activities on resources (including agricultural resource lands, cultural resources, forest resource lands, and mineral resource areas (Map 9.4)), the environment and natural resources

(particularly critical areas, wildlife habitats and water quality) as part of its environmental review process.

Objective 6.4 Maintain low-density “urban separators” areas which protect environmentally sensitive areas and create open space corridors within and between urban areas, consistent with the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

Policy:

LU-12 The City shall maintain urban separators in the Lea Hill area as designated by King County.

**Residential  
Development**

Within most communities, a range of housing densities is allowed to provide a variety of housing opportunities. The wider the range, the greater the opportunity for individuals to find housing relative to their particular needs, affordability and preference.

While the City's policy provides for a relatively wide range of residential densities, development over the past decade has been heavily concentrated toward the middle and upper levels of the range (See discussion in Chapter 4, Housing Element).

As land costs have escalated in the region, however, Auburn has remained relatively affordable to the average family.

This Plan provides that the City should seek to restore the traditional character of the community by encouraging preservation and development of housing that is suitable to the retention and attraction of families within the community. This would be best accomplished by focusing multi-family development in the urban center, protecting the residential character of existing single family neighborhoods and promoting the development of new neighborhoods of single family homes. Consequently, residential land use policies will emphasize the creation and preservation of single family neighborhoods, while still encouraging the development of other housing types for those who need or want them.

**GOAL 7. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To emphasize housing development at single family densities, in order to reestablish a mix of housing types appropriate for a family oriented community, while recognizing the need and desire for both lower density and higher density housing appropriately located to meet the housing needs of all members of the community.

Objective 7.1. To establish a system of residential densities that accommodates a range of housing choices appropriate for the city.

Policies:

- LU-13 The City should promote the provision, preservation and maintenance of adequate housing for the city's residents by encouraging a balanced mix of housing types and values appropriate to the income levels and lifestyles of area residents. Auburn has always been willing to accept its "fair share" of low and moderate cost housing opportunities. However, this has translated into a great disparity in Puget Sound communities with cities such as Auburn receiving more of these types of housing than other comparable communities. This has had impacts in terms of the costs of meeting human service needs as well as some poorly maintained multifamily properties which have caused a variety of problems. Auburn will work to insure that housing units are equitably distributed across the region in terms of both physical location and cost.
- LU-14 Residential densities in areas designated "residential conservancy", which represent areas that have environmental constraints or which promote protection of City water sources, should be no greater than 1 dwelling unit per 4 acres until such time public facilities are available. Where it is found through a land use approval process to be supportive of the purpose of the "residential conservancy" designation, where it does not substantially adversely impact the surrounding residential community and demonstrates compliance to development standards specified in the zoning code, agricultural uses and limited commercial uses in support of agricultural uses may be allowed with appropriate environmental protection.
- LU-15 The area designated "residential conservancy" allows for a lifestyle similar to that of rural areas since the lower density established protects the critical areas such as the City's Coal Creek Springs watershed. A rural lifestyle generally includes allowance of farm animals, streets not urban in character (e.g. no sidewalks, street lights only at intersections), and limited agricultural type uses. The "residential conservancy" also allows appropriate-scale commercial activity in support of agricultural uses where it is found through a land use approval process to be supportive of the purpose of the "residential conservancy" designation, where it does not substantially adversely impact the surrounding residential community and

demonstrates compliance to development standards specified in the zoning code.

- LU-16 Residential densities within designated “urban separators” should be no greater than 1 dwelling unit per acre. Clustering of allowed density onto a portion of a site should be favorably considered.
- LU-17 Residential densities in areas designated for single family residential use should be no greater than 7 units per net acre. These areas should be served with good transit availability (1/4 mile or less to a route with at least half hour service). Accessory dwelling units should be permitted to allow increased densities. The bulk of the single family residential community should be developed at a density of between 4 and 7 dwelling units per net acre. Increased density is achievable through flexible development standards, if certain criteria are met, as established in city code.
- LU-18 Residential densities in areas designated for multiple family development should not exceed 20 units per net acre. Multiple family densities should generally decrease with proximity to single family areas. Multiple family densities may exceed 20 units per acre provided they are within walking distance of 1/4 mile from regional transit facilities or are targeted to populations not requiring outdoor recreation areas and having low private automobile usage (e.g. nursing homes). These targeted developments should be located in close proximity to shopping, medical and public transportation services. Increased density is achievable through flexible development standards, if certain criteria are met, as established in city code.

Objective 7.2. To designate land for the development of new single family homes.

Policies:

- LU-19 In applying the land use designations of the Comprehensive Plan, first consideration shall be given to designating an area for single family residential use.
- LU-20 Most of the undeveloped areas of the Community Serving Area of the city (see Map 3.2) shall be reserved for single family dwellings. The ability to buffer the area from incompatible land uses and heavily traveled arterials or highways should be considered in designating currently undeveloped areas for future single family use. Such buffering can be accomplished

by taking advantage of topographic variations and other natural features, requiring expanded setbacks along arterials, by orienting lots and houses away from arterials, by designating moderate density multiple family areas as transitional areas, and by other means.

Objective 7.3. To promote the development of quality single family neighborhoods which relate the design and types of residential areas to important natural and manmade features.

Policies:

- LU-21 Residential development should be related to topography, circulation, and other amenities, as guided by policies of this Plan.
- LU-22 Residential development should be discouraged in poorly drained areas.
- LU-23 The development of new neighborhoods should be governed by development standards which allow some flexibility. Flexibility should be considered to encourage compact urban development, to provide protection of critical areas and resource lands (including, but not limited to, agricultural resource lands, cultural resources, forest resource lands, mineral resource areas (Map 9.4) hillsides or wetlands), and to facilitate non-motorized transportation. Increased density is achievable through flexible development standards, if certain criteria are met, as established in city code.
- LU-24 The development of residential areas should recognize the importance of community and public facilities in developing a sense of neighborhood and community.
- LU-25 Residential development of shoreline areas shall be in accord with the City's Shoreline Management Program and should provide for the retention of public access to these areas. Special care should be taken in the design of residential areas in shoreline areas to reduce the potential conflict between residential use and public access.
- LU-26 Emphasis shall be placed upon the manner in which the recreational needs of the residents shall be met in the approval of any residential development.

- LU-27 Any change from the residential conservancy designation shall be to a single family designation. Single family residential areas should also be used to buffer rural areas from other urban uses.
- LU-28 Areas abutting major arterials should be carefully planned to avoid potential conflict between the development of the arterial and single family uses. Single family uses in such areas should be platted in a manner which orients the units away from the arterial. Where such orientation is not possible, a transition area should be allowed for non-single family uses which reduce total driveway connections to the arterial. In any case, non-motorized access between residential areas and arterials should be provided. In areas with existing single family developments, substantial flexibility can be permitted for street front buffering.

Objective 7.4. To establish new neighborhoods in a way that will minimize the potential for intrusion of incompatible uses.

Policies:

- LU-29 Development design should utilize and preserve natural features, including, but not limited to, topography and stands of trees, to separate incompatible land uses and densities.
- LU-30 Development design should use open spaces, including parks, to separate incompatible uses.
- LU-31 Development codes shall be modified to allow the City to require that landscaped buffers, natural area preservation or other measures are utilized to separate new residential developments from incompatible uses and major streets. These buffers should permit access between the residential area and the major street by pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Multiple Family Housing**

The escalating gap between the costs of housing and the ability to pay rental or mortgage prices has increased the demand for multi-family units. Unfortunately, it is clear that the development of multiple family dwellings in single family areas has created an adverse reaction. The level of conflict between single family neighborhoods and multiple family dwellings must be reduced. Since much of this reaction is related to the design of these structures, design standards could substantially reduce this problem for new construction.



Objective 7.5. To meet the need for multiple family dwellings while avoiding conflict with single family residential areas.

Policies:

- LU-32 In considering where future higher density development should locate, priority shall be given to designated Special Planning Areas (where such use can be balanced and planned with single family areas), the Downtown and areas with high levels of transit service.
- LU-33 Unless required for other purposes, the need for new higher density developments shall be based on local need for such units and should not substantially exceed a fair regional share of such housing.
- LU-34 Multiple-family developments should be located functionally convenient to the necessary supporting facilities including utilities, arterials, parks, transit service, etc.
- LU-35 Design codes and guidelines are developed for multifamily housing to ensure high quality design and compatibility with surrounding development. These standards should be reviewed periodically to remain consistent with planning trends and market demands.
- LU-36 Multiple family dwellings shall not be permitted as a matter of right in single family residential districts, but should be permitted only where necessary to remove potential blight, to buffer single family uses from incompatible uses or activities, or to allow effective use of vacant areas. Standards for such siting should provide for design review to ensure compatibility and provide that the density of development is consistent with the density of the adjoining single family uses.
- LU-37 Siting of moderate density units shall be encouraged as a buffer between single family areas and more intense uses. Such buffering is appropriate along arterials where existing platting prevents effective lot layout for single family units. Also, such buffering is appropriate between single family areas and commercial and industrial uses. Where there are established single family areas, the design and siting of moderate density units shall be controlled to reduce potential conflicts and to ensure buffering of uses. Higher density units are not to be considered such a buffer.

LU-38 Higher density developments or larger scale multiple family developments should be limited to residential areas where they can be developed as a unit with the necessary supporting facilities. Such development shall provide adequate access by developed arterials with minimal potential to generate traffic through single family areas. Extensive buffering measures shall be required where such areas adjoin single family residential areas. Care should be exercised to avoid creating barriers to pedestrian and bicycle movement. Where feasible, new multiple family development should be planned in conjunction with single family and moderate density development.

### **Manufactured Homes**

Manufactured homes provide affordable housing to many Auburn residents. In many cases, they provide the opportunity of home ownership to households which cannot afford to purchase more traditional types of housing. However, poorly designed, high density manufactured home parks can raise the same issues that multiple family developments pose. Careful design and placement of manufactured housing in parks especially with appropriate landscaping, can greatly reduce problems associated with such development.

This Plan's policies continue to recognize the benefits that manufactured homes can have on housing affordability. Improved codes requiring high standards for the design and siting of manufactured home parks and units on individual lots should be implemented.

#### **Objective 7.6**

To continue to allow manufactured homes as an affordable form of home ownership, provided that such developments are carried out in a manner which supports rather than detracts from the quality of the community and adjacent uses.

#### **Policies:**

LU-39 The siting of new manufactured home parks shall be subject to the same policies applicable to high density residential development. Manufactured home park densities should not exceed 8 units per acre. New manufactured home parks shall be bordered or contained by physical features, or planned and designed as part of a larger development incorporating other housing types in a manner which limits further manufactured home park expansion into adjacent areas.

- LU-40      Manufactured homes shall be permitted on single family lots provided that they are sited and constructed in a manner which would blend with adjacent homes. Manufactured homes must be new units, meet minimum dimensional standards (double wide) and be placed on permanent foundations, consistent with State law.

### **Moderate and High Income Housing**

The City wants to increase the amount of housing oriented toward those with moderate and high incomes. A jurisdiction typically encourages a type of development by providing incentives which lower the cost of producing that development type, thereby increasing its potential profitability. With the limited financial resources available to municipalities it is difficult to justify financial incentives to increase the profitability of the production of market rate housing. Further, since the production of housing for moderate and higher income groups is profitable without these incentives, it is not clear that incentives will have the desired effect of increasing the number of houses produced.

Potential solutions to this issue need to address the demand side of the market rather than the supply. The market will provide these types of housing if there is sufficient demand for it within the city. Auburn can increase the demand for housing by those with moderate and higher incomes by improving its image within the region and making itself known as a desirable place to live. A comprehensive approach to increasing the demand for moderate and high income housing is through the implementation of this comprehensive plan. By building a community with parks and open spaces, job opportunities, high environmental quality, and abundant supportive services including commuter rail, Auburn will create for itself a more desirable image within the region and therefore a wider range of income groups will choose to live in Auburn.

Policy:

- LU-41      Development regulations should ensure that Auburn obtains its "fair share" of high end single family housing. This does not represent a decrease in Auburn's commitment to maintaining the majority of its housing stock as housing affordable to middle income households.

### **Neighborhood Quality**

Auburn's existing stable residential neighborhoods form an important component of the community's character. Maintaining the vitality and stability of these neighborhoods is a key goal of this Comprehensive Plan.

**GOAL 8. NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY**

To maintain and protect all viable and stable residential neighborhoods.

Objective 8.1 To maintain and enhance all viable and stable residential neighborhoods.

Policies

LU-42 Regulatory decisions in all residential neighborhoods shall result in maintenance or enhancement of the neighborhood's residential character.

- a. The location of uses other than those permitted outright shall only be allowed as specified in this comprehensive plan and in the zoning code.
- b. Approval of any non-residential land use shall occur only after a public hearing process.
- c. The City recognizes the important role that public facilities (such as sidewalks, neighborhood parks and elementary schools) and limited scale quasi-public uses (such as smaller churches and daycare centers) play in maintaining viable residential neighborhoods.
- d. Single family detached residential neighborhoods should be protected from intrusion by non-residential or large scale multi-family uses.

LU-43 The City shall seek to abate existing incompatible uses in residential neighborhoods. Mineral extraction operations within mineral resource areas (Map 9.4) operating in compliance with the conditions of their permit are not incompatible uses.

LU-44 Home occupations in residential neighborhoods shall be permitted only if they comply with performance standards that ensure compatibility with adjacent residential uses.

LU-45 Limited agricultural uses and commercial uses (such as daycare centers) may be permitted as a principal use, but only under appropriate conditions, by means of conditional use or administrative use permits when landscaping and design features can be used to minimize impacts on surrounding uses and the site is:

- a. Along the border of residential neighborhoods; or
- b. In specific areas where site specific conditions may limit the use of the site for residential uses; or
- c. Along arterials transecting residential neighborhoods.

LU-46 Development standards and regulations for residential areas should avoid unnecessary barriers to the renovation and improvement of homes in established neighborhoods built to previous standards.

LU-47 The City should give special attention to improving the quality of low income neighborhoods and seek to implement programs which encourage rehabilitation of deteriorating structures and facilities in such neighborhoods. (Guidance for this policy is provided by the City's annual Block Grant Program Plan.)

Objective 8.2 To provide for the orderly transition to other uses of older residential areas that are no longer viable.

Policies:

LU-48 The management of areas in transition from existing residences to a planned non-residential use, should balance the needs of existing residents with the need to accommodate new uses.

LU-49 Greater flexibility should be provided for home occupations in transitional areas.

LU-50 Whenever considering a conversion from single family to another use, the applicant's burden shall be on demonstrating the unsuitability of an area for continued single family use.

## **Commercial Development**

Commercial land development provides needed services and jobs to Auburn and regional residents and visitors. Further, it is a major component of Auburn's tax base through the sales tax and property taxes it generates.

There are several different types of commercial land, each providing different types of services and jobs. The discussion and policies that

follow recognize the importance of each of these types of commercial development and the important role that they play.

**GOAL 9. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To maintain and establish a variety of commercial environments which provide the full range of commercial services to the community and region in a manner which reduces conflicts between different types of commercial services and other uses.

*Neighborhood Commercial*

Small commercial centers within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods serve a useful function in providing convenient access to neighborhood residents for their "everyday" or "convenience" shopping needs. These centers can serve to reduce the number of automobile trips or at least shorten them by providing services near one's residence. For neighborhood centers to provide these benefits, attention must be paid to ensuring adequate access to these centers from the adjacent neighborhood. However, these commercial areas can also adversely affect a neighborhood by generating traffic and land use conflicts.

Due largely to the extensive commercialization of Auburn Way and the north/south orientation of the developed portions of Auburn, few residential neighborhoods within the city lie more than several blocks from a commercial area. Significant outlying commercial centers have also been developed, so that the currently developed residential neighborhoods are adequately served. However, future large scale residential developments will create a need for new small-scale commercial centers. This Plan's policy toward neighborhood commercial centers balances needs for shopping convenience with the protection of residential neighborhoods, and seeks to limit the development of new inappropriate commercial strips.

Objective 9.1. To provide for the convenience commercial needs of residential areas, while protecting existing and future residential neighborhoods from the disruptive effects of commercial intrusions.

Policies:

LU-51 Existing neighborhood oriented commercial centers should be identified and designated. Commercial uses within these centers should be limited to those having primary market areas considerably smaller than the entire community.

- LU-52 Designated neighborhood commercial centers should be prevented from spreading along the arterials that serve them.
- LU-53 A prime consideration in permitting the expansion of existing neighborhood commercial areas shall be the ability to adequately buffer any nearby residences from disruptive impacts.
- LU-54 In some instances of existing neighborhood commercial centers, a transition zone of moderate density residential uses should be designated between the center and single family residential areas.
- LU-55 New neighborhood commercial centers should be considered under the "Special Planning Areas" concept. Such areas should be carefully designed and integrated into the overall area development plan so as to minimize traffic and land use conflicts. Commercial uses should be limited to those having primary market areas approximately the size of the special planning area.
- LU-56 Consideration should be given to providing adequate access to neighborhood commercial development by non-motorized modes such as walking and biking. Barriers to these modes such as walls and fences should be removed when possible and shall be avoided in new development.

#### *Mixed Use Centers*

Commercial centers at times can through a proper mix of uses be integrated with residential components. These mix use centers serve in providing convenient services, alternative living environments, and efficient use of both land and infrastructure.

#### Objective 9.2

To provide where appropriate mixed use of commercial and residential development designed to assure compatibility of uses inside the commercial center and adjacent residential neighborhoods

#### Policy:

- LU- 57 Mixed-use developments with both commercial and residential components are encouraged in Light Commercial centers. These developments should include primarily retail stores and offices designed to provide convenient shopping and other services for nearby residents. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be excluded.

Design features of mixed-use developments should include the integration of the retail and/or office uses and residential units within the same building or on the same parcel. Ground level spaces should be built and used predominately to accommodate retail and office uses. Off-street parking should be located behind or to the side of the buildings, or enclosed within buildings. Accessible pedestrian connections and bicycle paths must be designed to facilitate safe connections within the development, along adjacent roads adjacent and to adjacent residential developments.

Design guidelines for mixed-use development have been developed. These guidelines should be reviewed and amended periodically to be consistent with current planning trends and market demands.

#### *Highway Commercial*

While commercial uses along arterials (often called "strip commercial" development) provide important services to community residents, the proliferation of commercial uses along arterials raises several land use planning issues. On the negative side, strip commercial development creates traffic flow problems and conflict with adjacent land uses. Due to their "linear" nature, commercial strips result in a maximum area of contact between commercial uses and other land uses resulting in a high potential for land use conflicts. Poor visual character due to excessive signage and architectural styles designed to attract attention instead of promoting a sense of community is an additional concern. Pedestrian shopping is made difficult, resulting in greater generation of automobile traffic, and large fields of asphalt parking lots are needed to accommodate single purpose vehicle trips.

Despite the problems associated with commercial development along arterials, many such locations are often quite unsuitable for other uses, due to the impacts associated with heavy traffic volumes. Also, many commercial uses thrive at such locations due to high visibility and accessibility. The Plan seeks to manage existing arterial commercial areas to take advantage of the accessibility they provide, while minimizing traffic and land use conflicts and improving their visual appearance through an enhanced design review process and development standards.

Objective 9.3. To encourage the appropriate use of areas adjacent to heavily traveled arterials while minimizing land use and traffic conflicts by:



1. Managing the continued commercial development of existing commercial arterials in a manner which minimizes traffic and land use conflicts.
2. Conserving residential qualities along heavily traveled arterials which are not yet commercialized, by restricting commercial development to types which provide an appropriate buffer.
3. Protecting existing, viable residential areas along lesser-traveled arterials, from commercial development.
4. Concentrate population and employment growth within the eight key economic development strategy areas within the City identified as follows:
  - Auburn Way North Corridor
  - Auburn Way South Corridor
  - Urban Center
  - Auburn Environmental Park and Green Zone
  - 15<sup>th</sup> Street SW/C Street SW/West Valley Highway/Supermall
  - A Street SE Corridor
  - SE 312<sup>th</sup> Street/124<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Corridor
  - M Street SE between Auburn Way North and Auburn Way South.

Policies:

- LU-58 The City has identified those existing commercial arterials that are appropriate for continued commercial development and employment growth as well as a concentration of population growth. These areas are identified as the eight economic development strategy areas as identified under Objective 9.3. Sub-area plans for these strategy areas should be developed.
- LU-59 The City shall review its standards relating to the number, size and location of driveways to ensure consistency with goals and policies relating to arterial commercial development.
- LU-60 The City shall encourage the grouping of individual commercial enterprises along commercial arterials to promote the sharing of parking areas, access drives and signs. Such grouping can be encouraged through land division regulations, sign regulations and development standards.
- LU-61 Moderate density multiple family residential development shall be used to buffer general (heavy) commercial arterial development from single family development. Extensive

screening and landscaping shall be used to buffer general commercial uses from multiple family uses. However, the placement of walls and fences and site designs which prevent easy access by bicyclists and pedestrians should be avoided.

- LU-62 Arterials experiencing strong pressure for commercial development, but not yet committed to commercial uses, shall be designated for mixed use commercial and high density multi-family uses. Development regulations should encourage the development of professional office and similar uses and multiple family housing, with development and design standards carefully drawn to ensure preservation of a quality living environment in adjacent neighborhoods.
- LU-63 Residential arterials having good potential for long term maintenance of a quality living environment should be protected from the intrusion of commercial uses. In some instances, these may be appropriate locations for churches and other religious institutions, or moderate density multiple family uses.
- LU-64 Newly developed arterials shall incorporate design features, and development of adjacent land shall be managed such that creation of new commercial strips is avoided. Land division regulations shall result in single family residences being oriented away from the arterial, with access provided by a non-arterial street.
- LU-65 Along the Auburn Way South Corridor, employment and population growth should be limited to north of the R Street SE overpass.
- LU-66 The City should develop design standards and guidelines for development along arterials to improve their visual appearance.

#### *The Regional SuperMall*

The development of the "*SuperMall of the Great Northwest*" on 155 acres near the junction of SR167 and SR18 in the 1990's has led to a "destination" mall attracting consumers from long distances.

During the Mall's development review, a number of issues were raised. Included in these issues were the impacts of the SuperMall on Auburn downtown and the possibility of commercial sprawl around the SuperMall that would exacerbate impacts to the downtown and traffic around the SuperMall.

Since that time, several factors have changed. Auburn's downtown, as a designated urban center, has developed a more specific vision for the community. Also, it is not expected that the SuperMall will develop to its maximum square footage and retail commercial uses have become a more important local government revenue source.

The City should continue its commitment to the SuperMall's development as a regional attraction, and take advantage of the SuperMall's presence to complement strategies related to downtown preservation and development.

Objective 9.4. To capture the retail market of customers visiting the SuperMall and strengthen Auburn's role as a major retail commercial center for the region.

Policies:

LU-67 Support commercial development around the SuperMall that complements its role as a regional shopping center as well as future redevelopment that could include high density housing.

LU-68 The City will oppose the development of a regional shopping center in the unincorporated areas in the vicinity of the city.

LU-69 The City will seek ways to draw customers from the SuperMall into the downtown and other areas within the city.

LU-70 The City shall continue to recognize and support the development of downtown Auburn as a focal point of the Auburn community.

### **Downtown Auburn**

Downtowns have historically served as the business, cultural and governmental focal points of their communities. In many communities (like Auburn) this role has been challenged by new shopping patterns focused on regional malls and commercial areas outside of the downtown. Maintaining a healthy and vital downtown Auburn continues to be important as it is recognized by residents as a focal point of the community and an important element of the City's identity.

In May 2001, the Auburn City Council adopted the Auburn Downtown Plan. The Auburn Downtown Plan is the City's updated strategy to continue its downtown revitalization efforts consistent with State, regional and local growth management planning concepts and strategies. The Auburn Downtown Plan, and this Plan, provides that Downtown Auburn

should remain the commercial, cultural and governmental focal point for the community. Efforts to enhance this function for Downtown Auburn are strongly supported.

The Auburn Downtown Plan is based on implementing policies and strategies through partnerships and innovative techniques. The City, the downtown business community and members of the community at-large will need to work closely together to maintain and upgrade the quality of the downtown working, living and shopping environment.

Part of the impetus for developing new strategies to approach downtown revitalization is the development of the Sound Transit Commuter Rail Transit Station. The Auburn Downtown Plan seeks to build on the excitement and energy resulting from public investment in the Transit Station and in other public investments such as the Third Street Grade Separation project.

The Auburn Downtown Plan envisions downtown as an urban center. Designation as an urban center was achieved in 2004. Auburn's urban center:

- Establishes a 220 acre planning area that is the focus for downtown redevelopment.
- Provides incentives for downtown development and redevelopment through policy direction that supports:
  - Elimination of transportation impact fees;
  - Elimination of stormwater improvements for redevelopment of existing sites that do not result in an increase in impervious surface;
  - Lower level of service for transportation facilities; and,
  - Reduction in the off-street parking requirements compared to other areas in the city.
- Encourages non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle connections and linkages to and within the urban center area.
- Encourages protection of historic assets and resources from redevelopment activities.
- Identifies potential catalyst projects and sites to spur development activity in the downtown and better focus redevelopment and marketing efforts.
- Encourages more residential development downtown and also 24-hour type uses and nighttime activity.
- Seeks to remove undesirable land uses and other blighting influences in the downtown area.
- Promotes street improvements and enhancements to improve access and the visual qualities of the streetscape.

In early 2007, the City established a new zoning district for the majority of downtown, the Downtown Urban Center (DUC) district. Unlike other zones, this district allows all types of land uses unless specifically prohibited. In addition, it regulates the intensity of development by allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and provides incentives for higher intensity of use. The DUC zone also features relaxed parking standards from those found in other zone districts and by reference, adopted Design Standards to ensure a high quality of development in the downtown area.

## **GOAL 10 DOWNTOWN**

To encourage development and redevelopment within Downtown Auburn which reflects its unique character as the community's historic center, that is consistent with the Auburn Downtown Plan's vision for Downtown Auburn as an urban center within King County and the Puget Sound region.

Objective 10.1 To preserve and enhance the role of downtown Auburn as the focal point of the Auburn community for business, governmental and cultural activities.

### **Policies:**

- LU-71 For the purpose of implementing the goal and policies for downtown Auburn, "downtown" shall generally be considered that area bounded on the south by Highway 18; on the east by "F" Street; on the north by Park Avenue (extended); and on the west by the Union Pacific tracks. (See Map 3.3)
- LU-72 Auburn's urban center/regional growth center boundaries shall be those established as the planning area for the Auburn Downtown Plan adopted May 2001 (See Map 3.4).
- LU-73 Implement the policies and strategies of the Auburn Downtown Plan to support development of Auburn's urban center.
- LU-74 Encourage the attainment of urban center growth forecasts through implementation of higher intensity development to achieve the efficient use of land.
- LU-75 Downtown shall continue to be recognized as the business, governmental and cultural focal point of the community. A diversity of uses including multifamily residential should be encouraged to maintain a vibrant, active and competitive center for the City of Auburn.

LU76 The City should continue to support the development and rehabilitation of multiple family housing in the Downtown, as part of mixed use projects.

LU-77 The City shall maintain an ongoing downtown planning and action program involving the downtown business community and other interested groups. This activity should be guided by this Plan and the Auburn Downtown Plan.

LU-78 The City shall continue to give priority consideration to the maintenance and improvement of public facilities and services in the downtown area.

*Downtown Land Uses*

Objective 10.2 To recognize areas within the downtown that have identifiable characters and uses.

LU-79 The area north of First Street North, west of Auburn Avenue, south of Fifth Street North and east of the Burlington Northern tracks should be designated and managed as a medical and professional services area. New heavy commercial and industrial uses should be prohibited and existing ones amortized. Commercial uses supporting medical and professional uses should receive priority.

LU-80 To increase consistency with the Urban Center boundary, the area lying generally east of "D" Street S.E. to "F" Street S.E. and south of Main Street (not including the Main Street frontage) to SR 18 shall be designated for mixed residential and commercial uses.

LU-81 The area lying generally between Auburn Way North (but not properties abutting Awn) and Auburn High School should be designated for multiple family residential uses.

LU-82 Automobile oriented uses within the Downtown Urban Center shall be developed and located in accordance with the policy direction of the Auburn Downtown Plan and implementing DUC, Downtown Urban Center code requirements.

LU-82.A The area lying generally south of East Main Street (not including the Main Street frontage) and east of "F" Street S.E. shall be maintained as a single family residential area.

*Downtown Urban Design*

Objective 10.2: To ensure that all new development and redevelopment in the downtown reflect the unique character of the area.

LU-83 The City shall develop programs and ordinances to preserve and protect downtown's historic character. Development codes should be revised as needed to recognize the uniqueness of downtown through appropriate performance standards and design guidelines. A high level of visual amenity should be pursued, and no heavy outdoor uses or outdoor storage should be allowed.

LU-84 The downtown area shall be comprised of a mixture of uses consistent with the area's role as the focal point of the community. These uses shall be primarily "people-oriented" as opposed to "automobile-oriented", and shall include commercial, medical, governmental, professional services, cultural and residential uses.

LU-85 Regulations for the retail core of downtown should encourage retail uses, but should discourage uses which result in a high proportion of single use vehicle trips (such as fast food restaurants and drive-through windows).

*Downtown Transportation*

Objective 10.3: To emphasize pedestrian traffic and transit usage in the downtown.

LU-86 Emphasis should be given to enhancing pedestrian linkages between the Hospital area, the Main Street retail core, the Performing Arts Center, the southwestern portion of Downtown, and the parking area adjacent to Safeway. An important element of this emphasis will be to reduce the pedestrian barrier effect of Auburn Avenue and Auburn Way.

LU-87 The City should build upon past efforts to improve pedestrian amenities, through public improvements, sign regulations and development standards. The maintenance of public and private improvements should be given priority commensurate with downtown's role as the focal point of the community.

LU-88 The City shall work with transit providers to increase the availability and effectiveness of transit in downtown and between downtown, other commercial and employment areas, residential areas, and the region at large.

LU-89 As regional transportation programs such as commuter rail are implemented, the City will strive to ensure that the downtown is a beneficiary.

*Downtown Parking*

Objective 10.4: To develop a parking program for the downtown which recognizes the area's historic pedestrian character, while providing sufficient parking for customers of all businesses, residents, and commuters.

LU-90 A strong Downtown shall be encouraged through improved parking, circulation, and the grouping of business outlets and governmental services. Parking standards should be developed which recognize the unique nature of downtown parking demand. The City should work with the business community in public/private partnerships to develop a coordinated and effective approach to providing adequate parking and circulation.

LU-91 A strong Downtown shall be encouraged through improved parking, circulation, and grouping of business outlets and governmental services. The development of public parking lots to serve the downtown should be guided by a Downtown Parking Plan.

LU-92 The City views adequate parking in the downtown area as a critical step in implementing the downtown policies and the rehabilitation policies of this Plan. All business in the downtown area will be hindered if adequate parking is not available. However, parking needs coupled with rehabilitation needs in the downtown area require special policies:

- a. Some flexibility in the general parking requirements of the City may be necessary to accommodate reuse of existing buildings and to accommodate new development. Such flexibility should be directed at seeking to pool parking resources through the formation of a Downtown parking LID when such parking cannot be provided by the business or through shared parking agreements.
- b. Since rigid parking requirements will interfere with redevelopment of downtown, and the pattern of existing development restricts the amount of parking available, public development of parking in the downtown area is appropriate.



- c. A comprehensive study of the parking needs of downtown should be made to determine the most efficient method of meeting the unique parking demands of the area.
- d. Parking policy for the downtown needs to balance the impact of parking on downtown's pedestrian character, economic development and transit usage.

### *Downtown Redevelopment*

Objective 10.5: To work with all interested groups on revitalizing the Downtown area.

- LU-93 The City of Auburn should strive to maintain active working relationships with the Auburn Downtown Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other groups whose goal is the revitalization of downtown. The City will seek to become a partner with these and other groups, where feasible, in public/private partnerships that further the goal of downtown revitalization.
- LU-94 The City shall continue to support legislation to improve fiscal leverage in urban rehabilitation programs.
- LU-95 The City shall continue to support the redevelopment efforts of the private sector in the downtown area.

### **Industrial Development**

Auburn's industrial land and the development that it supports accounts for a significant percentage of the City's tax base. It also provides a large number of jobs to both city and regional residents. Good industrial land is a limited resource and should be fully utilized to maximize its potential benefits. Industrial development typically utilizes extensive amounts of land and is typically located near major transportation facilities. For these reasons, industrial activities are often quite visible. For people traveling on SR167, industrial development is the primary view they have of Auburn.

The Washington State Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill 5089 on March 22, 2007 that became effective on July 1, 2008 that changed Washington's sales tax collection system from an origin-based system for local retail sales tax to a destination-based system. Previously, Washington retailers collected local sales tax based on the jurisdiction from which a product was shipped or delivered - the "origin" of the sale. Presently, they must collect based on the destination of the shipment or delivery - the "destination" of the sale. Destination-based sales tax applies

only to businesses that ship or deliver the goods they sell to locations within Washington. Under the destination based system, if a retailer delivers or ships merchandise to a buyer in Washington State, the sales tax is collected based on the rate at the location where the buyer receives or takes possession of the merchandise. The destination based system has shifted the distribution of local sales tax around the state. As a result of this legislation, the City of Auburn has experienced a net loss in sales tax revenue totaling approximately \$2 million annually due to the large presence of warehousing and distribution uses in the City. While the City has been a recipient of sales tax mitigation payments from the State of Washington that has served to offset these losses, the continued availability of these payments is not certain due to current and future State budget issues.

The City's land use strategies are dependent upon the City being able to continue a strong public investment program in infrastructure and services. The City's ability to continue this public investment is contingent upon maintaining solvent public revenue streams, particularly sales tax. Sales tax comprises the largest source of monies to the City's General Fund, approximately 30 percent in 2010. The City anticipates that current and long-term fiscal challenges facing the State of Washington will likely result in the dissolution of the current sales tax revenue mitigation program. The eventual loss of the aforementioned sales tax revenue will directly and adversely affect the City's ability to adequately fund the capital infrastructure and services necessary to support the realization of the City's land use plans. This is especially applicable to industrial areas supporting warehouse and distribution centers that are origin based in nature.

In November 2004, the City Council approved Resolution No. 3782 that outlines an approach and actions the City will take related to land use planning, zoning and other matters in the event a streamlined sales tax proposal or other similar proposals that change the tax structure are adopted. Included in this resolution is direction to consider amendments to the comprehensive plan and zoning codes to reevaluate the existing industrial land use designations and patterns in the City.

To ensure the City's long-term ability to invest in public infrastructure and services remains viable, the City must pursue implementation of policies that incentive the transition of current and future land uses in its industrial zones away from distribution and warehouse uses. The City believes that manufacturing and industrial land uses should over time largely replace warehouse and distribution land uses currently existing in the City and that any future warehouse and distribution uses should be ancillary to and necessary for the conduct of manufacturing and industrial uses. Manufacturing and industrial uses are more appropriate and beneficial through higher and better use of the land, enhanced employment densities,

increased property tax revenues and potential on-site sales tax revenue generation for receipt of materials and other goods and services. In addition, the City believes that policies that promote and incentivize greater retail uses in industrial districts should be implemented to increase the City's overall base of retail uses thereby increasing the City's overall collection of sales tax revenue.

## **GOAL 11. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To provide for, establish and maintain a balance of industrial uses that respond to local and regional needs and enhance the city's image through optimal siting and location, taking into consideration tax policy impacts of streamlined sales tax and/or other similar legislation.

### *Type of Industrial Uses*

There is a wide variety of possible industrial uses that could be sited in Auburn. As with the mix of residential uses, the mix of industry also affects the image of the city. The regional image of the city is that of an industrial suburb with an emphasis on heavy industry. This image is quite apparent as one travels along Highway 167 where there is an almost unending view of high-bay warehouse buildings.

Different types of industrial areas should be separated since some types of industrial activities conflict with other industrial activities (especially those of a more desirable character). Such separation should be based primarily on performance standards.

### *Location of Industrial Uses*

Before the adoption of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, there had been little separation of various types of industrial uses. At the time, there was no well understood policy basis regarding the separation of different types of industrial uses and some areas very suitable for high quality light industrial uses were committed to heavier uses. High visibility corridors developed with a heavier industrial character and established a heavy industry image for the city. The Plan provides clear distinction between different industrial uses. It also reserves areas for light industrial uses.

Objective 11.1. To create a physical image for the city conducive to attracting light industry.

Policies:

LU-96 Highly visible areas which tend to establish the image of the city should not be used by heavy industrial uses.

LU-97 The City shall promote high quality development of all light industrial and warehouse areas.

LU-98 The City shall aggressively seek to abate all potentially blighting influences in industrial areas, especially in areas visible to regional traffic flows and in areas designated for light industrial uses.

Objective 11.2. To establish performance standards appropriate for developing industrial areas.

Policies:

LU-99 Compatibility among land uses should be enhanced through landscaping, building orientation and setbacks, traffic control and other measures to reduce potential conflicts.

LU-100 All industrial development should incorporate aesthetically pleasing building and site design. The City shall amend its codes and performance standards which govern industrial development to implement this policy.

a. Procedures shall be established to ensure aesthetically pleasing building and site design in areas designated for light industrial areas.

b. Appropriate landscaping and site development standards shall regulate site development in heavy industrial areas.

c. Unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, service entrances, storage areas, rooftop equipment, loading docks, and parking areas should be screened from view of adjacent retail, commercial, light industrial and residential areas and from public streets.

LU-101 Needed rights-of-way, on-site and off-site road improvements, and utilities should be assured before development occurs.

LU-102 Individual development projects shall provide the following minimal improvements in accordance with established City standards:

- a. Full standard streets and sidewalks in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- b. Adequate off street parking for employees and patrons.
- c. Landscaping.
- d. Storm drainage.
- e. Water.
- f. Sanitary sewers.
- g. Controlled and developed access to existing and proposed streets.

Objective 11.3. To reserve areas appropriate for industrial development.

Policies:

- LU-103 Any significant industrial activity shall be limited to the designated Region Serving Area of the city (see Map 3.2). The City recognizes that industrial development's place varying demands on the community's quality of life and service capabilities. In addition to demonstrating a development's consistency with Plan policies, applicable land use regulations, and environmental policies, significant industrial development shall be encouraged to provide a balance between service demands and impacts placed on the city's quality of life vs. the local benefits derived from such development. The extent to which industrial development is promoted shall also take into consideration tax policy and tax structure impacts upon the City.
- LU-104 Residential uses in industrial areas shall be allowed in industrial areas that have been established to promote a business park environment that complements environmental features, and/or if development standards are developed to promote compatibility between residential and other non-residential land uses.
- LU-105 The grouping of uses which will mutually benefit each other or provide needed services will be encouraged.
- a. Compatible commercial uses may be permitted in designated industrial areas.
  - b. Planned developments (such as "office parks") which provide a mixture of light industrial with supporting commercial uses are encouraged.

c. Uses which support industrial and warehouse activities should be located near those uses.

LU-106 Development of designated industrial sites shall be consistent with applicable environmental standards and policies.

LU-107 Land made available for industrial development, and uses allowed in industrial zones, shall take into consideration impacts of tax policy and tax structure upon the City of Auburn.

Objective 11.4. To reserve and protect areas which are highly suitable for light industrial development.

Policies:

LU-108 Designation of light industrial areas shall have priority over heavier industrial uses.

LU-109 Highly visible areas (land visible from SR167 or SR18) which tend to establish the image of the city should not be used by heavy industrial uses. Rather, efforts should be made to develop zoning districts that complement industrial development adjacent to environmental features such as the Auburn Environmental Park.

Objective 11.5. To identify areas appropriate for heavy industrial uses.

Policies:

LU-110 Heavy industrial uses shall be separated from lighter industrial, commercial and residential areas.

LU-111 The most appropriate areas for heavy industrial uses are in the central part of the Region Serving Area adjoining the rail lines.

LU-112 Heavy industrial uses are appropriate in the southern portion of the Region Serving Area which is now developed in large scale industrial facilities.

LU-113 Heavy industrial uses shall be strictly prohibited from the Community Serving Area of Auburn (see Map 3.2). The only exception to this general policy shall be the continued heavy industrial use of the area east of "A" Street S.E., as shown by the Comprehensive Plan Map.

Objective 11.6. To realize the successful transition of existing warehouse and distribution uses to manufacturing and industrial uses.

Policies:

LU-114 Existing warehouse and distribution uses are not preferred long term land uses in industrial zoning districts in the City. Such uses should be transitioned to more beneficial manufacturing and industrial uses through the development and application of incentives.

LU-115 Regulatory and financial incentives will be identified and implemented where appropriate to provide increased opportunities and encouragement for the establishment of new or expanded manufacturing and industrial uses and jobs in the City.

Objective 11.7. To promote and incentivize increased retail uses in industrial zoning districts.

Policies:

LU-116 Changes in comprehensive plan and zoning policies and standards should be implemented to create regulatory controls and incentives for the increased use of land and buildings for sales tax producing commercial retail uses.

**Redevelopment and Infill**

A major goal of the Growth Management Act is to reduce urban sprawl. One way to minimize sprawl is to fully develop areas already receiving urban services prior to extending these services to additional areas. A further benefit of redevelopment is that it may lead to the removal of buildings and uses that detract from an area. Redevelopment can serve as a major catalyst in the stabilization and revitalization of areas throughout the city.

**GOAL 12. URBAN REDEVELOPMENT**

To encourage redevelopment of underutilized areas to reduce sprawl and take full advantage of the City's investment in existing infrastructure.

Objective: 12.1 To facilitate infill development.

Policies:

- LU-117 Encourage well designed infill and redevelopment projects to fully utilize previous investment in existing infrastructure in the single family residential, moderate density residential, and high density residential designated areas of the City.
- LU-118 Reduce the consumption of undeveloped land by facilitating the redevelopment of underutilized land and infill of vacant parcels whenever possible in the single family residential, moderate density residential, and high density residential designated areas of the City.
- LU-119 Explore innovative mechanisms to encourage the more efficient use of land including density bonuses and sale of air rights.
- LU-120 Identify areas for commercial infill development and focus street and utility systems improvements to facilitate their development.