

Lakewood

The City of Lakewood is located in southwest Pierce County. Originally known as the “Lakes District,” Lakewood took its current name in 1910. The city grew as a residential and resort area, but was only incorporated as an independent city in 1996. The city shares borders with Tacoma to the north and east, University Place to the northwest, Steilacoom to the west, and Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) to the south. In 2010, Lakewood had a population of 58,163. Since the opening of Ft. Lewis in 1917, and dedication of McChord Air Force Base in 1930, both of which are now part of a joint base, Lakewood has had close economic and community ties with the military. The military influence and the recent growth of JBLM have played significant roles in defining the city and the South Sound.

Lakewood’s commercial development is largely representative of typical suburban patterns. Commercial development is concentrated around the Lakewood Towne Center and along major arterials such as South Tacoma Way, Bridgeport Way, Gravelly Lake Drive, and Pacific Highway SW. The city’s vision for Lakewood’s regional growth center is a dense mix of business, commercial, and cultural activity targeted for employment and residential growth, served by high-capacity transit and major public amenities.

The center comprises the entire central business district CBD and the majority of the district surrounding Sound Transit’s Lakewood commuter rail station. The regional growth center includes the Lakewood Towne Center area, the Lakewood Colonial Center, St. Clare Hospital, and surrounding areas containing a mix of retail, commercial, and residential uses. To encourage redevelopment of the regional growth center, the City of Lakewood took the deliberate approach of siting its new city hall and municipal courts building at its heart. The project included a roundabout in front of the new city hall, along the newly developed Main Street, which helped to begin breaking up the large “superblocks” that characterize the area and improve access and traffic circulation. The center saw new retail development in the area immediately surrounding the former mall. The Lakewood Colonial Center, a cluster of colonial-style buildings to the north of Lakewood Towne Center, has a mix of retail and office uses and has not experienced the same level of reinvestment and redevelopment as the mall area. Nevertheless, the center and surrounding colonial-style buildings are major community assets and have the potential to become a nucleus of an older town center adjoining the newly developing mall area.

Acreage, Density & Mix of Activity

Lakewood is medium-sized regional growth center in terms of total gross acreage (538 acres) with a net developable acreage of 439 acres (82% of gross acres). In terms of its role in the city overall, Lakewood’s center contains 4 percent of the city’s land area, 5 percent of the population, 6 percent of the housing, and 26 percent of the employment. Compared to centers as a whole, Lakewood has a relatively small number of total

2010 Summary Statistics

Land Use	
Gross acreage	538
Average block size (acres)	9.9
Average parcel size (acres)	0.5
Mix of Uses	
Population/Employee ratio	.52 : 1
Population+Employee/acre	17.1
Population	
Total population	3,159
Population density/acre	5.9
Change (2000–2010)	249
Housing	
Total housing units	1,574
Housing unit density/acre	2.9
Change (2000–2010)	197
Employment	
Total employment	6,025
Employment density/acre	11.2
Change (2000–2010)	755
Transportation	
Housing access to transit	88%
Employee access to transit	99%
Work-based mode share	
SOV / HOV	81% + 9%
Walk & Bike / Transit	3% + 7%

Urban Amenities

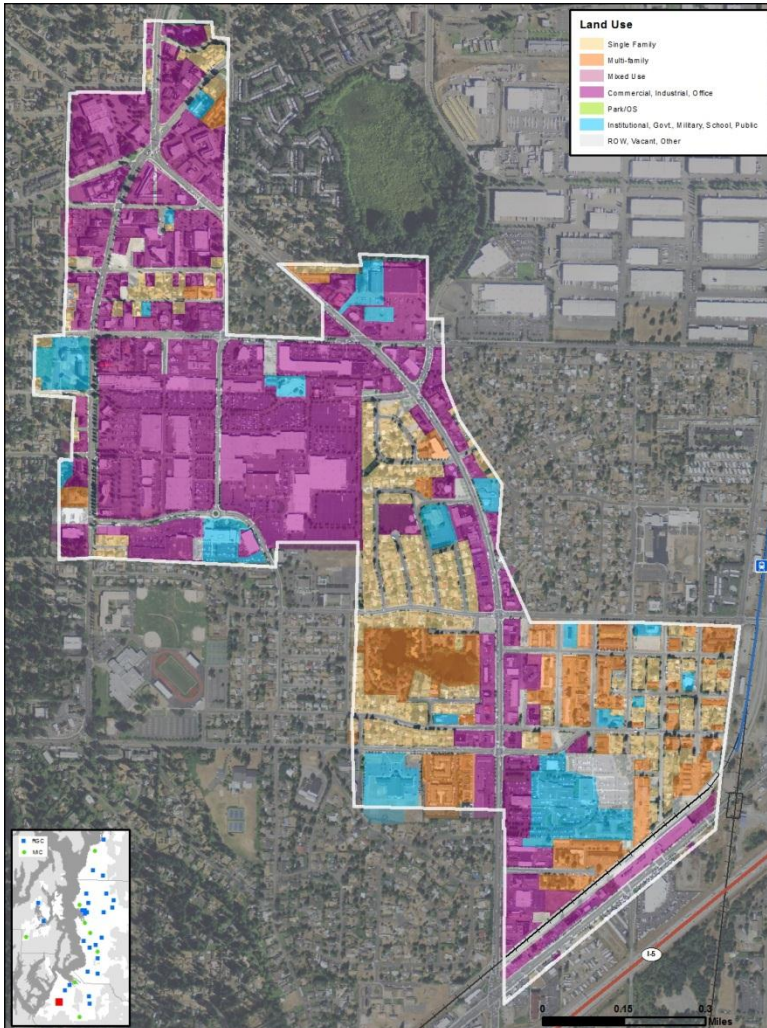
Food & Drink	
Restaurants	41
Grocery	8
Cafes & Bars	12
Home Supplies & Services	
Pet Supplies	3
Laundry & Haircuts	17
Home supplies	2
Clothing & Shoes	12
Banks	16
Arts & Recreation	
Spectator Sports	-
Fitness & Outdoors	2
Electronics & Toys	5
Bookstores & Libraries	1
Arts & Culture	2
Public & Civic Services	
Social Services	13
Schools & Childcare	6
Police, Fire, Postal, City Hall	1
Pharmacy	3
Healthcare	65
Residential Care Centers	4

activity units (9,184), with mostly employment-oriented activity (66% jobs/34% residents) and moderately-low density of activity (17.1 units per gross acre).

Urban Form

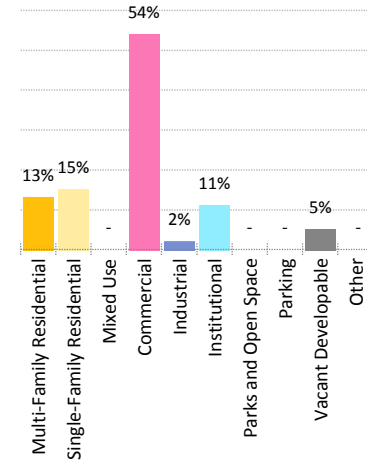
Lakewood's average parcel size is 0.5 acres, which is smaller than the average size for growth centers. Lakewood provides a limited pedestrian environment, with an incomplete network of sidewalks (52% coverage) and very large blocks with a 9.9 acre average size. The presence of amenities is an important aspect of urban form.

Lakewood has a moderate set of urban amenities (213 total amenities / 0.4 amenities per gross acre). Public/Civic Services (41%) and Food/Drink (32%) represent the largest amenity categories, with specific concentrations in Healthcare, Restaurants and Banks.



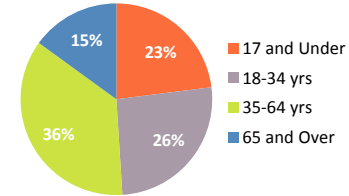
Current Land Use

(439 net acres)



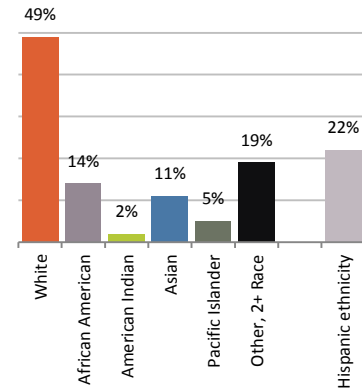
Age of Residents

(3,159 residents)



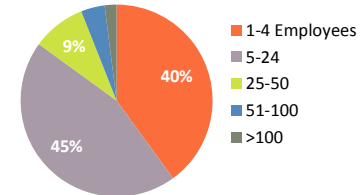
Racial/Ethnic Composition

(3,159 residents)



Size of Businesses

(369 workplaces)



Land Use

Lakewood contains a mixed set of current land uses that are evenly distributed between commercial/industrial (56%) and residential (28%) in terms of total net land area. The major land uses are commercial (54%), single-family residential (15%), multi-family residential (13%) and institutional (11%).

Demographics

The total population in Lakewood’s center is 3,159, and grew by 249 residents from 2000 to 2010. The center has about the same age profile as the region as a whole, with a high share of youth (23%) and a moderate share of seniors (15%). The age range of residents is predominantly 35-64, followed by 18-34 (62% for both age groups). At 51 percent, Lakewood's racial diversity is significantly greater than the region's 27 percent share of non-white residents. Lakewood is among the most ethnically and racially diverse of the regional growth centers. The groups with the highest shares in Lakewood are White (49%), Other (19%), Asian/Pacific Islander (16%), and African American/Black (14%). Twenty-two percent of residents identify as Hispanic.

Employment

The total employment in the Lakewood’s regional growth center is 5,988, increasing by 719 jobs from 2000 to 2010. The major industry sectors are Services (64%), Retail (18%) and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (10%). Some of the largest businesses in this center, in terms of total employment, are St Clare Hospital, Clover Park School District, Greater Lakes Mental Health, and the City of Lakewood.

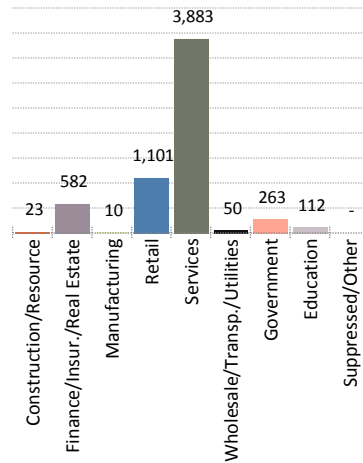
Housing

The Lakewood regional growth center has 1,574 total housing units, with a density of 2.9 housing units per gross acre. From 2000 to 2010, housing has increased by 197 units (14% growth). Based on Census Block Group data, Lakewood has a very large share (65%) of single family and 2- to 4-unit multifamily dwellings and a moderate share of 5- to 19- and 20+ unit multifamily (34%). In terms of unit affordability, Lakewood’s owner-occupied housing tends to be significantly less expensive than the region as a whole (based on Census Block Group data). The center's share of units under \$300,000 is 77 percent, whereas the region's share is 38 percent. The center's share of units over \$500,000 is 6 percent, whereas the region's is 25 percent.

In terms of employee access to transit, Lakewood has complete access, with 99 percent of employees within a 1/4 mile walk of transit. For residential, Lakewood has very good access, with 88 percent of housing units within a 1/4 mile walk. For the 1/2 mile walkshed, the center has complete levels of residential access to transit (100%).

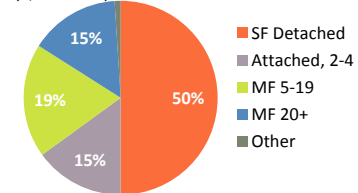
Jobs by Sector

(6,025 jobs)



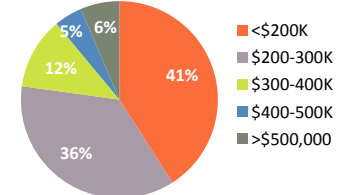
Housing Units by Type

(3,130 units)

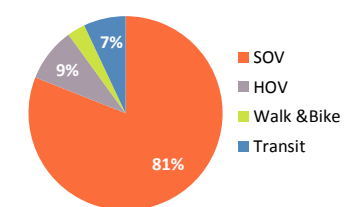


Value of Owner-Occupied

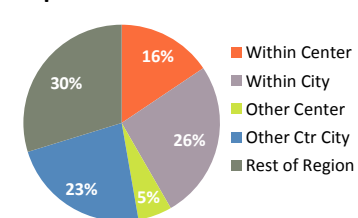
Units (1,141 units)



Mode Shares



Trip Destinations



Transportation

For work-based trips, the Lakewood regional center's travel characteristics are similar to the region as a whole. The region's single-occupant vehicle (SOV) share is 76 percent, while the center's share is 81 percent. The region's non-SOV mode share is 24 percent, with 10 percent in transit and 5 percent in walk/bike. The center's non-SOV share is 19 percent, with 7 percent in transit and 3 percent in walk/bike. Total daily trips from the Lakewood center are moderately focused on destinations in regional centers (21% of all trips); this includes trips that stay within the center (16%) and trips that go to other centers (6%).

Plan Overview and Comparison to Center Plan Checklist

The city's primary center planning document was reviewed to evaluate the extent to which the plan addresses topics in the PSRC Regional Center Plan Checklist. This policy-level review of the current plan is intended both to provide preliminary assessment of consistency of the plan with center guidelines and to evaluate the Regional Centers Checklist for any potential improvements.

Although the citywide plan has policies to guide development in the center, Lakewood does not yet have a specific subarea plan for its regional growth center. Lakewood's comprehensive plan, adopted in 2004, includes some sections that address the regional growth center specifically, and goals and policies related to the center are integrated throughout the plan. This analysis covers only the comprehensive plan policies that directly address the regional growth center – these policies were provided by City of Lakewood staff.

Several aspects of the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist have been addressed by policies in the comprehensive plan. A vision for the center is described as “creating a downtown in the CBD, redeveloping it into a rich urban area with civic amenities, walkable streets, and a mix of uses including housing, entertainment, restaurants, and retail.” The plan includes a clear relationship to the countywide planning policies (CWPP), including a policy to “adopt by reference and implement the CWPP for urban centers.” The comprehensive plan describes boundaries for the center and indicates that detailed design standards will be established to encourage pedestrian-oriented development. The comprehensive plan includes some center-specific housing policies, including encouraging dense multifamily development downtown and indicating that a Multifamily Tax Exemption program will be developed for parts of the center. Several Transportation 2040 Physical Design Guidelines are addressed, including promoting a mix of complementary uses, mitigating effects of parking, and encouraging pedestrian-oriented development patterns. The plan includes several policies that support an integrated multimodal transportation network downtown.

The plan addresses several items on the Regional Growth Center Plan Checklist, though there are topics that the comprehensive plan does not address or that could be strengthened through a dedicated regional growth center plan element. The plan does not reference a market analysis, and center-specific policies and policies have not yet been included to address the environment, public services, or the economy. As the city moves forward on planning for the center, additional detail could be added for transportation-related strategies to meet the city's goal of developing an integrated multimodal transportation system in the center. This includes adoption of mode-split goals for the center, addressing the Transportation 2040 Physical Design Guidelines, and tailoring of level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions for the center to encourage transit.

Planning Challenges

As noted by the city in its June 2009 presentation to the Growth Management Policy Board, as well as a 2011 survey, the Lakewood center's challenges include a lack of market demand, fragmented parcel ownership, oversupply of parking, inconsistent street grid pattern, and corporate locational criteria focused on large parking lots. The city identified several physical infrastructure barriers, including roads with outdated and potentially unsafe designs, traffic congestion, and lack of transit service and nonmotorized facilities.

Lakewood has employed strategies to address challenges and plan for the success of its center. Incentives and investments include enabling Multifamily Tax Exemption within the center and other housing incentives, such as reduced fees, reduced parking requirements, and increases in lot coverage and allowable height and density for providing affordable units in otherwise market-rate projects. Residential over commercial mixed use is allowed in most zoning districts in the center. The city has also enacted design review and offers permit assistance.