



## **INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Planning and Community Development Committee**

**FROM: Derek Speck, Economic Development Administrator**

**DATE: October 30, 2023**

**SUBJECT: Economic Development Strategy**

### **ISSUE**

Staff requests Council consensus to accept the proposed Economic Development Strategy.

### **BACKGROUND**

For a number of years the City has been interested in creating an economic development strategy. Although the City's Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, zoning, and other infrastructure plans provide significant vision and strategy related to economic development, an economic development strategy can provide additional focus, context, options, and guidance for the community, staff, and policy makers.

Following is a summary of actions by the City Council and Planning and Community Development Committee (PCD) related to the project:

- May 3, 2021 PCD considered a budget request to create the Strategy.
- November 15, 2021 Council approves budget amendment including the request.
- March 7, 2022 PCD opportunity to provide feedback on draft Request for Proposals.
- June 6, 2022 Council authorized contract with Community Attributes (PCD 5/16/22).
- August 8, 2022 Council consensus for the community engagement plan (PCD 8/1/22).
- October 17, 2022 PCD provided input on key questions.
- December 5, 2022 PCD provided feedback on a draft vision and goals.
- July 17, 2023 PCD provided feedback on a revised vision and goals plus reviewed the draft landscape assessment and engagement results.
- August 7, 2023 PCD provided feedback on draft strategies and actions.

### **DISCUSSION**

The process the City followed to create the economic development strategy started with hiring the consulting firm of Community Attributes (CAI). CAI began by creating a landscape assessment of Tukwila. CAI and City staff jointly conducted community engagement, summarizing key findings, and drafting a vision statement, goals, strategies, and potential actions. Those components are summarized below.

#### ***Landscape Assessment***

The landscape assessment summarizes research related to Tukwila's current role in the regional economy. It includes a summary of relevant regional planning policies from the Puget Sound Regional Council, Greater Seattle Partners, and King County plus Tukwila's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan. The landscape assessment also includes relevant data and trends on demographics, businesses, workforce and other key economic issues. To provide context, the assessment includes comparisons to the cities of Burien, Des Moines, Renton and SeaTac plus King County and the Seattle region. The landscape assessment is attached.

### ***Community Engagement***

The City Council expressed interest in significant community engagement and provided an additional \$50,000 for enhanced community engagement. The full community engagement process and results are included in the attached Community Engagement Report. The following is a brief summary of the engagement.

*Website.* The city dedicated a page on our website for the economic development strategy. People can go to [TukwilaWA.gov/Economy](http://TukwilaWA.gov/Economy) to learn about the project, participate in an online survey and online map, and register to receive updates. We also provided a QR code for easy access to the survey.

*Online Survey.* The project team provided an online survey in ten languages and it was available from October 2022 through July 2023. The survey received 80 responses.

*Online Map.* CAI created an interactive map that was posted on the website for public participation from October 2022 through August 2023. The map received 16 responses.

*Paper Survey.* City staff collected paper surveys at the Tukwila Village farmers market in October 2022.

*Promotion.* The City promoted the surveys and website through the City's regular social media, Hazelnut, e-Hazelnut, emails to businesses, contracted engagement, and by distributing flyers at a See You in the Park event, National Night Out, and Saar's Super Saver grocery store.

*Listening Sessions.* City staff conducted twelve listening sessions including all nine City boards and commissions, the Black Student Union at Foster High School, the Rotary Club of SeaTac-Tukwila, and the SeaTac-Tukwila Community Coalition. Key findings from the listening sessions is included in the Community Engagement Report. Complete notes from each of the listening sessions are available on the City's website as an attachment to the agenda of the Planning and Community Development Committee's meeting held on July 17, 2023.

*Contracted Engagement.* The City contracted with seven businesses and non-profit organizations for help engaging with particular communities. The type of engagement varied based on each organization's strengths and recommendations. Key findings from that work is summarized in the Community Engagement Report. Full copies of each organization's report are available on the City's website as an attachment to the agenda of the Planning and Community Development Committee's meeting held on July 17, 2023. Following are the contracted organizations and their scopes of work:

1. African Community Housing and Development provided a report based on their own recent surveys of small businesses and residents in SeaTac and Tukwila.
2. Debonair Barbershop promoted the online survey to their customers and other Tukwila barbershops.
3. Growing Contigo promoted the online survey via social media and door-to-door with a focus on Spanish language businesses.
4. Riverton Park United Methodist Church promoted the online survey to unhoused individuals living on the Church property and assisted with responses.

5. Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce went door-to-door on two occasions in the Southcenter District and one occasion along Tukwila International Boulevard and collected feedback from 75 businesses.
6. Somali Health Board promoted the online survey along Tukwila International Boulevard and assisted respondents at Abu Bakr Islamic Center with a focus on the Somali language business and residents.
7. Talitha Consults collected paper surveys from two market rate, low income apartment complexes and held a listening session with ten students in a special education class at Foster High School. In total the survey was collected from 60 respondents and in seven languages.

*Focus Groups.* CAI conducted six focus groups which included community members representing residents, a variety of businesses, property owners, workforce development, and city departments. Key findings from that work are summarized in the Community Engagement Report. The topics included:

- Economic Diversification
- Identity, Marketing, Promotion and Image
- Retail, Dining and Entertainment
- Vibrant Community and Quality of Life
- Workforce Development and Access to Opportunity
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship

*Interviews.* CAI interviewed stakeholders on topics of economic development strategies, strengths and weaknesses. Key findings from that work are summarized in the Community Engagement Report.

*Advisory Committee.* The City formed a small advisory committee to provide general oversight to ensure the engagement process was reasonable and to provide feedback on the staff and consultant's recommendations but was not asked to vote or approve the recommendations. The committee met three times. Although small, the committee reflected a variety of interests in Tukwila and included two residents, a high school student, a member of the City's Equity and Social Justice Commission, an expert in local workforce development, a key employee of a multi-family residential developer, a developer and owner of a shopping center, and the president of the local chamber of commerce. We greatly appreciate the participation of the committee members:

- Keith Hubrath
- Annie McGrath
- Dennis Bao Nguyen
- Ginney To
- Leshya Wig

### **Key Findings**

Key findings from each of the types of engagement are included with the information related to that type. A summary of key findings across all types is in Chapter 2 of the Economic Development Strategy with a fuller explanation in the Community Engagement Report.

### **Vision, Goals, Strategies, and Actions**

One of the most important outcomes from the project will be the vision, goals, and strategies because these provide guidance to where we want to be and how we want to get there. These are intended to be principles that guide us for the next five to ten years and help prioritize work plans and resources. Detailed explanations are included in the Strategy document and summarized below. Examples of

potential actions are also included to show the types of specific projects or programs that can be included in work plans to accomplish the vision and goals. They are listed as “examples of potential actions” because they will depend on prioritization and resources. Some of the examples are within current resources but many are not.

**Vision:** *Tukwila is a vibrant community with a strong and sustainable economy that celebrates and empowers its diversity, supports economic prosperity for all residents, and sustains a foundation for businesses of all sizes.*

**Goal 1: A Vibrant, Diverse, and Resilient Economy**

Continue to strengthen and balance business growth, workforce development, and strategic housing growth in Tukwila to ensure an adaptable and diverse economic base that leverages Tukwila’s many assets and ensures the City’s financial stability.

***Strategy 1A. Attract and retain office, research & development, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food manufacturing, technology and life sciences businesses.***

Examples of potential actions:

- In the course of outreach to local businesses, assess the degree to which zoning and related standards support business operations.
- Promote Tukwila to the priority business sectors by building relationships with key firms and understanding their land, facility, infrastructure, and workforce needs.
- Actively assist businesses that also confer strong net financial benefit to Tukwila’s municipal revenue streams.

***Strategy 1B. Maintain support for and strengthen Tukwila’s robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sector.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Continue and grow the Experience Tukwila program to proactively market shopping, dining, and entertainment options available in Tukwila through targeted social media posts and individual business highlights in appropriate forums.
- Host events, activities, pop-ups, and / or temporary markets that activate public spaces and underutilized surface parking lots and contribute buzz and energy to surrounding commercial districts.
- Continue supporting Explore Seattle Southside to market activities and amenities that actively promote Tukwila as an option for overnight stays and layover breaks for air travelers.
- Promote the Tukwila International Boulevard neighborhood as an authentic, international district welcoming to visitors.
- Promote Southcenter’s free parking availability and ease of access regionally to draw additional traffic.
- Utilize existing channels to highlight, both to businesses and consumers, how Tukwila offers a fundamentally different experience than available in Seattle.
- Leverage Tukwila’s location and infrastructure to attract traffic and spending from passengers at SeaTac International Airport.

- Strengthen and diversify hotel offerings that contribute to vibrancy in Tukwila’s commercial districts.
- Assess the feasibility of—or provide support for—developing additional convention or meeting space.
- Identify opportunities to better connect International Boulevard (or the Tukwila/International Boulevard station) with Southcenter.
- Evaluate the feasibility of a trolley or other “circulator” linking the T/IB Station with businesses along International Boulevard and Southcenter.

***Strategy 1C. Collaborate with the private sector to leverage catalytic development sites.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Inventory all major developable or redevelopable sites in Tukwila, gathering information on ownership, zoning, and known development constraints.
- Prepare criteria for the development of publicly owned sites that may be available for future disposition.
- Work with the landowner to review and renew, as necessary, the Tukwila South development agreement to ensure the vision for this important future employment center is realized.
- Consider incentives and other tools such as the multi-family property tax exemption (MFTE) and tax increment financing (TIF) to incentivize private investment and new development to achieve the city’s vision.
- Continue to partner with the King County Flood Control District and US Army Corps of Engineers to monitor, maintain, and improve Tukwila’s levee systems and banks on the Green and Duwamish Rivers to ensure sustainable flood protection and increased environmental restoration and improved habitat.

***Strategy 1D. Implement the adopted long-term plans for Tukwila International Boulevard and the Southcenter District, with an emphasis on walkability, placemaking, and community gathering opportunities.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Seek opportunities to improve the experience in the Southcenter District, such as improving the public experience of Tukwila Pond Park; improving Baker Boulevard as a festival street; creating better pedestrian experiences; and connecting Westfield Southcenter to the commuter train station.
- Seek opportunities to improve the Tukwila International Boulevard neighborhood by create a walkable, pedestrian friendly experience along the Boulevard, incentivizing development on the Boulevard, leveraging the sale of City property for catalyst development, and fostering the international experience for visitors.

***Strategy 1E. Build and maintain relationships with property owners and businesses***

Examples of potential actions:

- Create and maintain a business contacts database
- Participate in networking opportunities
- Conduct a business outreach program

- Issue a business e-newsletter

## **Goal 2. A Safe and Desirable Community with a Positive Identity**

Enhance Tukwila’s public safety perceptions and sense of place and support a positive identity as a city in which to “Live, Work, and Play” – a community of choice for businesses and residents with outstanding transportation, quality housing, and supportive services.

### ***Strategy 2A. Improve perceptions of public safety through crime reduction, visible enforcement, improved communications, and messaging.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Support staffing and resources for public safety
- Invite key property owners and businesses to collaborate on public safety measures such as private security, information sharing, and property management practices.

### ***Strategy 2B. Invest in placemaking efforts that instill community pride, improve quality of life, and welcome visitors to our dynamic community.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Continue and seek to scale up public art and utility box art projects that are currently underway.
- Seek opportunities to leverage enjoyment of the Green River Trail and the river itself for economic development.
- Seek opportunities to improve Tukwila Pond for public enjoyment.
- Actively attract businesses that provide fun and positive experiences and build on synergy with existing businesses.

### ***Strategy 2C. Promote positive aspects of the Tukwila community to the region.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Continue and expand the Experience Tukwila social media and sponsorships program.
- Continue and expand Tukwila’s family friendly activities hosted by the City, partners, and outside organizations.

## **Goal 3. Prosperity and Opportunity for Businesses, Workers, and Residents**

Expand avenues of durable economic success for workers, entrepreneurs, business owners, and residents in Tukwila with a focus on shared prosperity, opportunity, and social responsibility for local communities.

### ***Strategy 3A. Improve workers’ access to education and workforce development opportunities.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Dedicate staff time to participate in workforce development and networking with workforce partners.
- Vocally advocate for and promote Tukwila’s specific workforce needs to workforce development organizations.

- Create and maintain an online directory of organizations and services in Tukwila providing workforce development, language training, internship and apprenticeship opportunities, and employment assistance.
- Promote workforce development opportunities, including training, workshops, education, and resources, directly to Tukwila residents.

***Strategy 3B. Connect employers with education and workforce development institutions.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Organize an event series to connect high school counselors and teachers to local industry representatives in high-growth and / or target sectors, such as biotech, media arts, and others.
- Leverage the success of the Tukwila School District's Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs by expanding student recruitment and program offerings, and by providing networking assistance to local employers, or otherwise connecting CTE teachers with private sector contacts.
- Connect with local employers' human resources staff to understand their needs and connect them with workforce development organizations.

**Goal 4. A Supportive Environment for Small Business and Entrepreneurs**

Maintain a strong, supportive environment for local, independent, small, and micro-businesses and the entrepreneurial ecosystem to ensure they continue to flourish in Tukwila while attracting new business activities to the city.

***Strategy 4A. Where possible, ease regulations that challenge small businesses.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Explore ways to adjust Tukwila's signage code in order to highlight Tukwila's small business offerings.
- Consider relaxing strict signage restrictions to allow greater flexibility of expression, branding, and identity in business signage.
- Examine internal processes for burdens on small businesses and remove whenever possible.
- Encourage the founding and development of home-based, virtual, mobile, and / or pop-up businesses that don't require brick-and-mortar locations with incentives and / or relaxing business licensing, permitting, fees, or other requirements.

***Strategy 4B. Ensure that business and entrepreneurial resources are accessible to all, including businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Continue and expand support for technical assistance consulting services to guide small businesses on matters ranging from taxes, business loans, permitting, lease negotiation, and hiring.
- Seek out and promote resources that of no-interest funding models for small businesses.

- Translate key small business materials into languages present in the Tukwila community and stress-test translations with community partners.
- Identify partners, sites, and financing avenues to develop community small-business and entrepreneur facilities such as commissary kitchens, maker spaces, community tool sheds, and others.

***Strategy 4C. Ensure that Tukwila projects an ‘open for business’ culture.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Develop a communication strategy to emphasize the city’s accessibility to its business community.
- Identify and track metrics related to permitting and entitlements timelines and work toward continuous improvement.

**Goal 5. A Community that Celebrates and Invites Diversity.**

Foster a business community in Tukwila that welcomes and empowers residential and business diversity in all its forms while capturing increased market share and building resilience to economic shocks.

***Strategy 5A. Promote business diversity by signaling public sector support.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Celebrate Tukwila’s diversity through targeted support, asset development, and promotion.
- Highlight & promote a rotating roster of individual minority and immigrant-owned small businesses in Tukwila’s existing social media communications.

***Strategy 5B. Provide crucial technical support and regulatory relief where feasible for small businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Identify resources and support to continue to cultivate ethnic shopping districts, including cuisine, and pursue recognition as a world-class street food destination.
- Educate and connect minority and immigrant-owned businesses on the availability of grant and low- to no-interest loan programs at local, state, and federal levels.

***Strategy 5C. Seek to understand the dynamics, needs, and relationships that characterize the minority and immigrant owned business community in Tukwila.***

Examples of potential actions:

- Survey minority and immigrant-owned small businesses to identify which culturally relevant business services the City should provide to small business owners in Tukwila.

**Next Steps**

If the Council accepts this proposed Economic Development Strategy, city staff will update the community and participants. The community, elected officials, and staff can refer to it when developing or considering future work plans and budget proposals. This will also serve as a significant component of the economic development chapter in the City’s 2024 Comprehensive Plan update.



**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is being asked to forward this item to the November 13, 2023 Committee of the Whole to express consensus to accept the Economic Development Strategy.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Slide Presentation  
Draft Economic Development Strategy  
Draft Landscape Assessment  
Draft Community Engagement Report





# Economic Development Strategic Plan

Presentation to City Council

November 2023





*Economic Development Strategy*  
 for the City of Tukwila, Washington  
 August 2023



# Tonight's Presentation

- Background**
- Landscape Assessment**
- Community Engagement**
- Key Findings**
- Vision, Strategies, Goals and Actions**
- Next Steps**





## Background

### Multiple Policy Documents

- Strategic Plan
- Comprehensive Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space PROS) Plan
- Utility Plans
- Zoning

### Desire for Additional Focus

**2022 Contracted with Community Attributes (CAI)**

**2022 Started Community Engagement**





# Landscape Assessment

## Regional Plans

## City Plans

## Demographic data

## Economic indicators

## Workforce indicators

## Comparisons

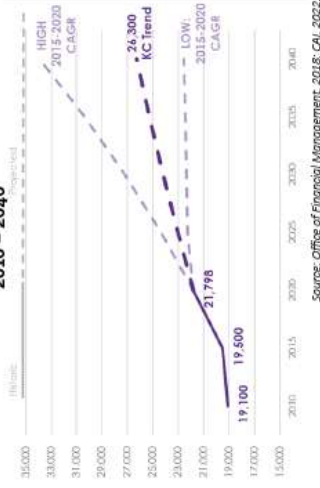
# Landscape Assessment

The Landscape Assessment helps build a common understanding of Tukwila's current role in the regional economy, including relevant research and information about regional and industry trends affecting the city, local socioeconomic conditions and other key economic issues. It includes comparisons to neighboring jurisdictions and King County to provide additional context. The Landscape Assessment is also instrumental in framing Tukwila's vision and goals as it engages the community in developing the Strategy.

## Tukwila's Demographic Characteristics

- Tukwila has grown at an inconsistent rate in the last 10 years, adding only 400 people in the first half of the last decade and over 2,000 people from 2015-2020
- Since 2010, Tukwila has had a declining share of people under 20, the senior population (over 65) has increased, and millennials remain the most prevalent age group.

## Historic and Population Growth Scenarios, Tukwila, 2010 - 2040



- Tukwila's population continues to become more **racially and ethnically diverse** and no racial group constitutes a majority.
- Over 40% of Tukwila's population are foreign born residents and more than half speak a language other than English at home.
- A large share of Tukwila's population has **limited English proficiency** and many households report speaking English less than "very well."

## Tukwila's Demographic Characteristics

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- Since 2010, Tukwila has had a declining share of people under 20, the senior population (over 65) has increased, and millennials remain the most prevalent age group.

## Percent of Population by Language Spoken at Home, 2020



Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.



## Community Engagement

TukwilaWA.gov/Economy

Online Survey (10 languages)

Online Map

Paper Survey

Promotion

Listening Sessions

Contracted Engagement

Focus Groups

Interviews

Advisory Committee





# Listening Sessions

Arts Commission

Civil Service Commission

Community Oriented Policing  
Advisory Board

Equity and Social Justice Commission

Human Services Advisory Board

Library Advisory Board

Lodging Tax Advisory Board

Parks Commission

Planning Commission



# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!





## Listening Sessions

- Black Student Union**
- Rotary Club of SeaTac/Tukwila**
- SeaTac Tukwila Community Coalition (STCC)**





## Contracted Engagement

**African Community Housing and Development**

**Debonair Barbershop**

**Growing Contigo**

**Riverton Park United Methodist Church**

**Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce**

**Somali Health Board**

**Talitha Consults**





## Focus Groups & Interviews

### Economic Diversification

**Identity, Marketing, Promotion and Image**

**Retail, Dining, and Entertainment**

**Vibrant Community and Quality of Life**

**Workforce Development and Access to Opportunity**

**Small Business and Entrepreneurship**





## Advisory Committee

**Keith Hubrath**

**Annie McGrath**

**Dennis Bao Nguyen**

**Verna Seal**

**Ginney To**

**Leshya Wig**





## Key Findings

# Key Findings from Stakeholders

With the assistance of city staff, Community Attributes interviewed individuals and facilitated focus groups with businesses, entrepreneurs, residents, and stakeholders across the Tukwila community. CAI also analyzed feedback received through the city's listening sessions, contracted engagement, and through the web-based community survey. Important themes emerged that were critical to informing Tukwila's economic goals, as well as in the development of strategies and potential actions to achieve those goals. The following summarizes a number of themes, opportunities and challenges that emerged from engagement activities.

## What Makes Tukwila an Attractive Place to do Business?

### Status as a Regional Retail Destination

- > Strong retail anchors and shopping areas
- > Diverse retail offerings and experiential attractions
- > Quality businesses draw customers from across the region

### Strategic Location and Robust Infrastructure

- > Central Location Within Region
- > Connectivity with major transportation arteries
- > Proximity to Sea-Tac Airport
- > Inventory of Industrial Space

## Workforce and Business in Tukwila

### Importance and opportunities to expand Workforce Development

- > Labor shortages cause challenges across sectors
- > Support enhanced collaboration between the school system and businesses to develop a robust workforce pipeline
- > Support workforce development efforts such as adult education, certification programs, job training, etc
- > Youth in Tukwila express strong interest in more workforce development opportunities

## Establishing Tukwila's Identity

### Building Upon Tukwila's Assets

- > Highlight Tukwila's offerings: Malls and beyond
- > Increase connectivity between parks, Green river, businesses, and neighborhoods
- > Support and build upon cultural businesses, including Tukwila's notable concentration of asian-based businesses
- > Highlight Tukwila's small town atmosphere
- > Invest in family-oriented benefits and activities

### Expansion into New Sectors

- > Attract companies that support higher wages in sectors such as Technology, Aerospace, and Research and Development
- > Consider building upon existing opportunities in sectors such as manufacturing, food production, warehousing, and wholesaling
- > Invest in Culture and Arts, Healthcare, and Small businesses and Start-Ups

### Growing Tukwila's Residential Community

- > A growing residential community creates the audience to support local business
- > Attract multi-family projects and protect existing housing
- > Incentivize affordable and workforce housing
- > Employ protections against residential displacement

## 16 Economic Development Strategy for the City of Tukwila



## Key Findings

# Key Findings from Stakeholders

## Cultivating and Promoting a Positive Reputation for Tukwila

### A Supportive, Business-friendly Environment

- > Adopt flexible land use policies and diversify types of available land
- > Cultivate a competitive landscape for financial resources
- > Improve regulatory efficiency (permitting and inspections)

### Enhance the Perception of Tukwila as a Safe and Attractive Community

- > Invest in public safety
  - > Work to identify and address root causes of homelessness and crime
  - > Beautify Tukwila through city cleanup, addressing building disrepair, and urban design strategies
  - > Host engaging and attractive cultural and community events
- Support diversification of food offerings in Tukwila

## Upcoming Economic Trends and Opportunities in Tukwila

### Development Opportunities

- > Development of Former Boeing Longacres area
- > Potential development in Tukwila South
- > Potential redevelopment around existing malls

### Other Economic Trends

- > Shift to higher Electric Vehicle usage in the region
- > Common ground between low-income and high-income groups in areas of safety, access, and affordability

## Investing in and Supporting Tukwila's Multi-cultural Community

### Trust Building with Communities of Color

- > Ensure equitable opportunities
- > Collaborate with trusted community stakeholders
- > Employ translation services and cultural competency

### Building Out Wrap-Around Services in Tukwila

- > Attract full-service grocers
- > Locate culturally competent urgent care facilities
- > Local need for Child Care
- > Invest in community beneficial social services
- > Open up community gathering spaces

### Build Up Community Supportive Infrastructure

- > Prioritize transportation improvements for pedestrians, bikers, and public transportation users
- > Invest in Tukwila's parking with lighting, ADA accessibility improvements and expansion of public recreation space

## Supporting Small Business in Tukwila

### Targeted support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

- > Address limited supply of affordable commercial or retail space options
- > Support navigation of evolving regulations and local ordinances
- > Utilize language barrier and financial literacy programs



## Vision Statement



*Tukwila is a vibrant community with a strong and sustainable economy that celebrates and empowers its diversity, supports economic prosperity for all residents, and sustains a foundation for businesses of all sizes.*





## Summary of Goals

### Goals

- goal 1** A vibrant, diverse, and resilient economy
- goal 2** A safe and desirable community with a positive identity
- goal 3** Prosperity and opportunity for businesses, workers, and residents
- goal 4** A supportive environment for small business and entrepreneurs
- goal 5** A community that celebrates and invites diversity







# goal 1 A vibrant, diverse, and resilient economy

*Strategy 1A:* Attract and retain office, research & development, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food manufacturing, technology and life sciences businesses

*Strategy 1B:* Maintain support for and strengthen Tukwila's robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sectors

*Strategy 1C:* Collaborate with the private sector to leverage catalytic development sites

*Strategy 1D:* Implement the adopted long-term plans for Tukwila International Boulevard and the Southcenter District, with an emphasis on walkability, placemaking, and community gathering opportunities

*Strategy 1E:* Build and maintain relationships with property owners and businesses





## goal 2 A safe and desirable community with a positive identity

*Strategy 2A:* Improve perceptions of public safety through crime reduction, visible enforcement, improved communications, and messaging

*Strategy 2B:* Invest in placemaking efforts that instill community pride, improve quality of life, and welcome visitors to our dynamic community

*Strategy 2C:* Promote positive aspects of the Tukwila community to the region





## **goal 3** Prosperity and opportunity for businesses, workers, and residents

*Strategy 3A: Improve workers access to education and workforce development resources*

*Strategy 3B: Connect employers with education and workforce development organizations*





## **goal 4** A supportive environment for small business and entrepreneurs

*Strategy 4A:* Where possible, ease regulations that challenge small businesses

*Strategy 4B:* Ensure that business and entrepreneurial resources are accessible to all, including businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants

*Strategy 4C:* Ensure that Tukwila projects an 'open for business' culture





## **goal 5** A community that celebrates and invites diversity

*Strategy 5A:* Promote business diversity by signaling public sector support

*Strategy 5B:* Provide crucial technical support and regulatory relief where feasible for small businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants

*Strategy 5C:* Seek to understand the dynamics, needs, and relationships that characterize the minority and immigrant owned business community in Tukwila





## Next Steps

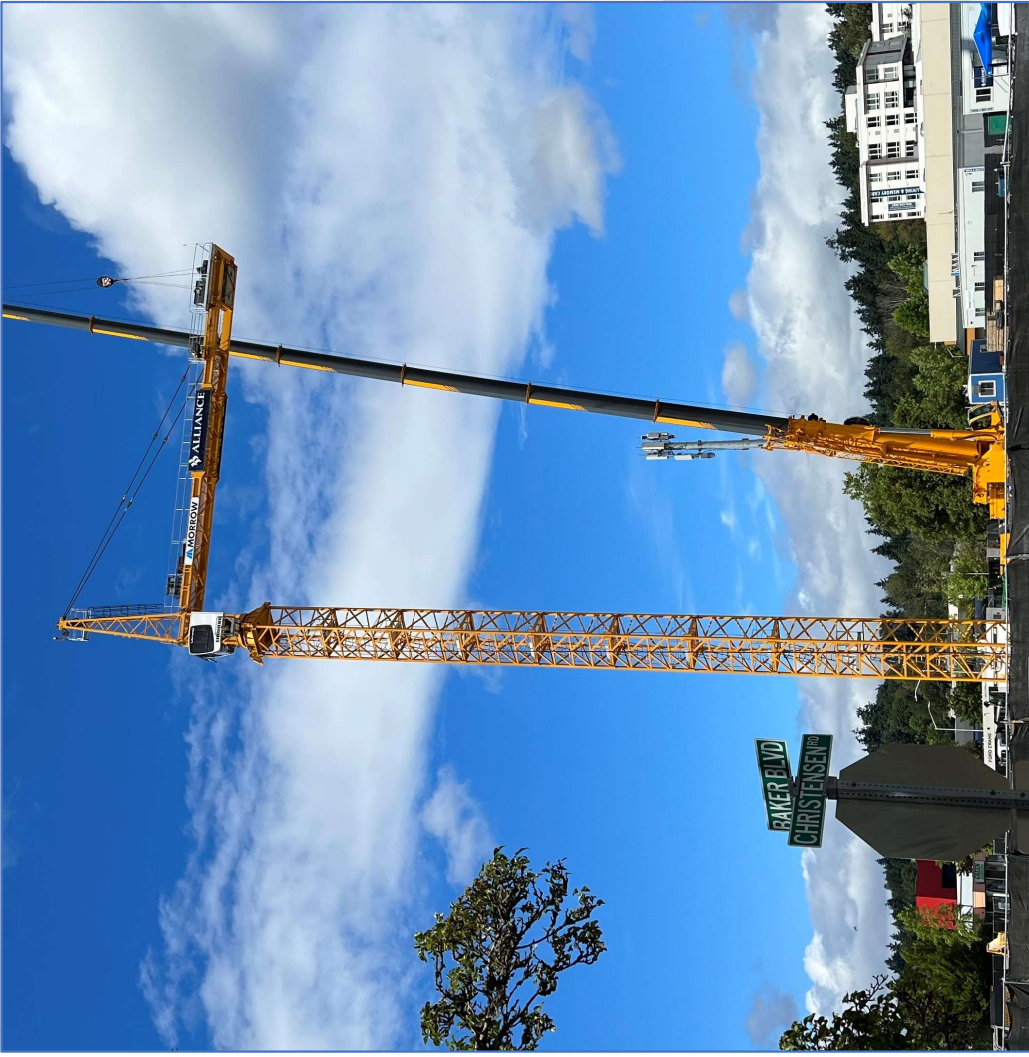
**Council consensus to accept**

**Follow up with participants**

**Economic development chapter in the  
Comprehensive Plan**

**Consider during 2024 workplans**

**Consider during 2024-25 budgeting**





## Appreciation

### Advisory Committee

Keith Hubrath

Annie McGrath

Dennis Bao Nguyen

Verna Seal

Ginney To

Leshya Wig

### Project Consultants

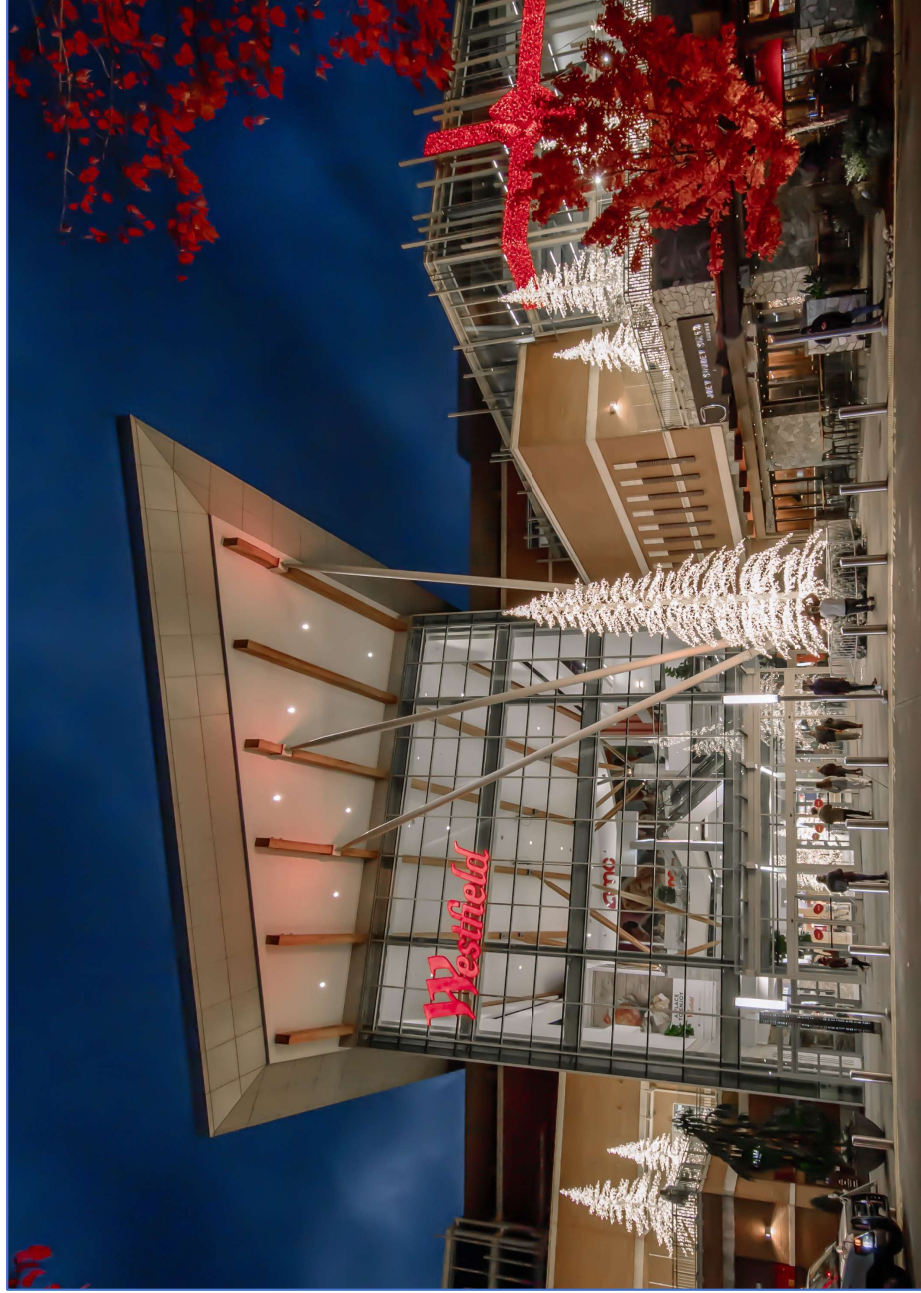
Chris Mefford, *President and CEO*

Elliot Weiss, *Project Manager*

Cassie Byerly

Bryan Lobel

Micheala Jellicoe



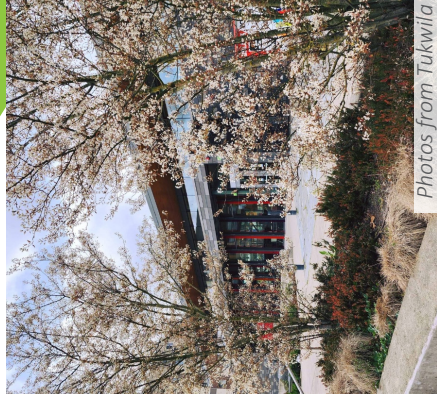






# Economic Development Strategy for the City of Tukwila, Washington

August 2023



Photos from Tukwila Instagram Account @experienceTukwila

# Acknowledgements

## 2023 Tukwila Elected Officials

- Allan Ekberg, *Mayor*
- Cynthia Delostrinos Johnson, *Council President*
- Mohamed Abdi, *Councilmember*
- Kathy Hougardy, *Councilmember*
- Kate Kruller, *Councilmember*
- Thomas McLeod, *Councilmember*
- De'Sean Quinn, *Councilmember*
- Tosh Sharp, *Councilmember*

## Tukwila Advisory Committee Council

- Keith Hubrath
- Annie McGrath
- Dennis Bao Nguyen
- Verna Seal
- Ginney To
- Leshya Wig

## Project Consultants

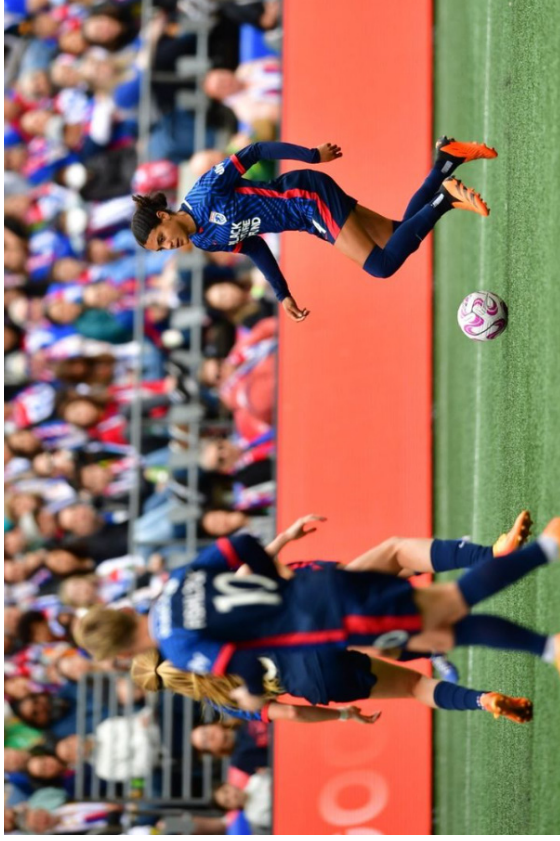
- Chris Mefford, *President and CEO*
- Elliot Weiss, *Project Manager*
- Cassie Byerly
- Kortney Cena
- Micheala Jellicoe
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## The Tukwila Community

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this planning effort by participating in an interview or group discussion or who shared insights, ideas, opportunities and challenges via our online mapping tool. Dozens of local perspectives helped shape this plan—your words and ideas find voice in the pages that follow.



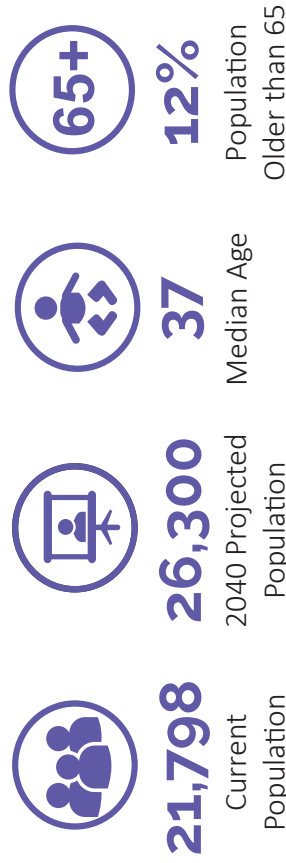
*OL Reign (formerly Seattle Reign FC) @experienceTukwila*

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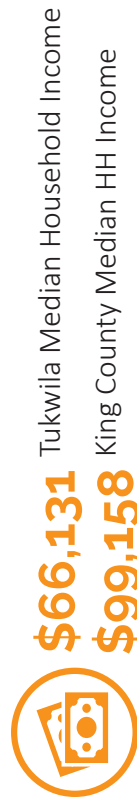
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# Tukwila Fact Sheet


## Demographic Characteristics



## Household and Housing Demographics



More than **1/3** Tukwila's households earn less than **\$40,000** annually 

 **49%** of Tukwila's renters are either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened

**Homeownership** is becoming more unattainable, and **rents remain high** for those on a limited income



## Workforce Indicators

 **4/5** of Tukwila's population 25 years old and older have a **High School education** or above

**22%** have a bachelor's degree or above 

Top 3 Sectors in employment for Tukwila residents:



Tukwila has **4X** the number of jobs as residents

 Only **2%** of Tukwila jobs are filled by Tukwila residents

## Economic Indicators



**20,000**

Projected job increase by 2050

Top 3 Sectors for Tukwila jobs:



**Services**



**Manufacturing**



**Retail**

Top growth industries in Tukwila:



**Construction**



**FIRE**



**Information**

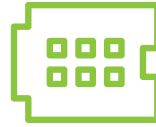


**Health**



Tukwila has consistently had higher **taxable retail sales** than comparison cities

The largest retail sales industry in Tukwila, **Clothing and Clothing Accessories**, faced declines in 2020 and has not fully recovered



Average firm size in Tukwila:

**15 employees**



**87%** of Tukwila's businesses have less than **25 employees**



Commercial Space in Tukwila:

**1/2** businesses use **< 10,000 SF**  
**1/3** businesses use **< 5,000 SF**

## SWOT Analysis

The following table outlines the results of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis conducted using data from the conducted Landscape Assessment and themes collected from recent, comprehensive engagement efforts.

<b>Strengths (Internal / Structural)</b>	<b>Opportunities (External)</b>
Sustainable economy built upon robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sectors with various strong anchors and major employers	Workforce development collaboration between school systems and businesses (ex. CorePlus Aerospace)
Multiculturalism and diversity, including culturally diverse businesses	Increasing residential population and developing affordable or workforce housing
Westfield Mall and Southcenter Blvd as centers of economic vitality	Planned or potential investment / development in the City (Boeing Longacres, Tukwila South, etc)
Vibrant community: Welcoming, tight-knit, diverse, multi-cultural, and inter-generational	Increasing immigration, diversification
Tourism: A family-friendly destination with plentiful retail and entertainment offerings	Shifting toward more cohesive identity (beyond regional shopping mall destination)
Strong millennial (working age) demographic cohort	Infrastructure enhancement: transportation, park, and recreation improvements
Locational Advantage: nearby airport, major highways, & Seattle	Trust building with communities of color
Green River corridor potential	Changing retail landscape (increasing value of experiential)
Level of city, community, and organization support for businesses of all sizes	Strengthening network between the City, key businesses, workforce development groups, and other business assistance groups
<b>Weaknesses (Internal / Structural)</b>	<b>Threats (External)</b>
Crime, homelessness, and drug use	Changing retail landscape (increasing revenue shift to destination)
Regulatory barriers that may challenge small businesses	Outside perceptions of public safety concerns
High commercial rents	Need for wraparound services, including health care, grocery, social services, and community gathering space
Relatively lower wages	Historic city reputation for businesses, residents, and visitors.
High cost of living	Difficulty in competing for skilled labor regionally
Lower median income & educational attainment	Rising housing prices regionally
Larger share of limited English proficiency	Higher housing cost burden
Reliance on automobile transportation	

# Chapter 1

## Background & Purpose



# Introduction

The City of Tukwila has a long history in addressing economic issues as part of regional and local planning and policy development. Existing plans and strategies for economic development continue to have relevance for economic conditions and needs in Tukwila. This includes an emphasis on a diverse and regionally competitive economy, a distinct focus on strengthening the city's engagement and partnership with the business community, cultivating improvement and diversity in the city's stock of business space, and ensuring that equity and resiliency sit at the forefront of economic development in Tukwila.

In preparation for its upcoming update to the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Tukwila worked with Community Attributes Inc., a Seattle-based land use and economic development consulting firm, to develop the city's first official Economic Development Strategy. Rooted in current market and industry dynamics to understand business and commercial growth capacities, this Strategy draws from historic planning efforts related to economic development and will guide efforts to strengthen Tukwila's economic future.

This document is a result of that effort and summarizes the following components of the update process:

-  **Existing Conditions & Landscape Assessment**
-  **Stakeholder & Community Engagement**
-  **Updated Goals, Strategies & Actions**



## **Purpose of This Strategy**

The purpose of this Strategy is to describe Tukwila's vision for sustainable and inclusive economic prosperity and to identify goals, strategies, and actions to achieve that vision. It will organize, prioritize, and guide the implementation of the very best ideas for Tukwila's economic future, guided by up-to-date and accurate market and land analyses. The Strategy will also inform the next update of Tukwila's Comprehensive Plan. Importantly, this Strategy can and should coordinate and inform budgeting, investments, and actions taken by the city and its partners for five to ten years from the date of the plan as well as leverage private investment in Tukwila by signaling where improvements will be made or prioritized by the public sector.

# Background

## Vision Statement

The following vision statement reflects input from the community, stakeholders, city staff, and other participants in this planning process. It articulates Tukwila's economic aspirations, and its desired economic characteristics in the future.

 *Tukwila is a vibrant community with a strong and sustainable economy that celebrates and empowers its diversity, supports economic prosperity for all residents, and sustains a foundation for businesses of all sizes.* 

## Selected Comparison Jurisdictions

CAI, together with City of Tukwila staff, identified a set of six jurisdictions as a comparative set of communities to provide context in evaluating demographic, economic and workforce conditions in the City of Tukwila.

The comparison cities evaluated for comparative purposes are:

- **Burien**
- **Des Moines**
- **Renton**
- **SeaTac**

**King County** and the **Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area** or **Greater Seattle Area** were also included to indicate trends and conditions facing the region that may impact Tukwila.



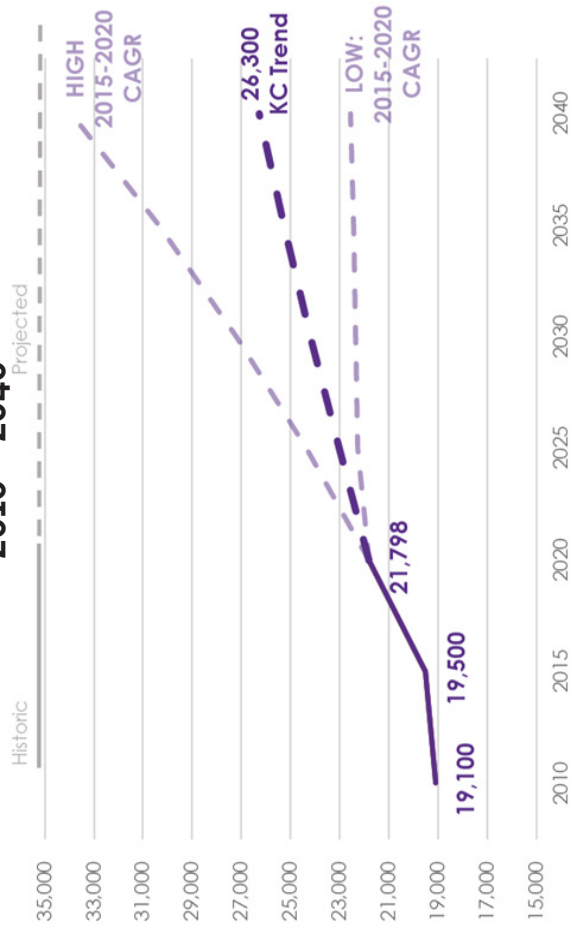
# Landscape Assessment

The Landscape Assessment helps build a common understanding of Tukwila’s current role in the regional economy, including relevant research and information about regional and industry trends affecting the city, local socioeconomic conditions and other key economic issues. It includes comparisons to neighboring jurisdictions and King County to provide additional context. The Landscape Assessment is also instrumental in framing Tukwila’s vision and goals as it engages the community in developing the Strategy.

## Tukwila’s Demographic Characteristics

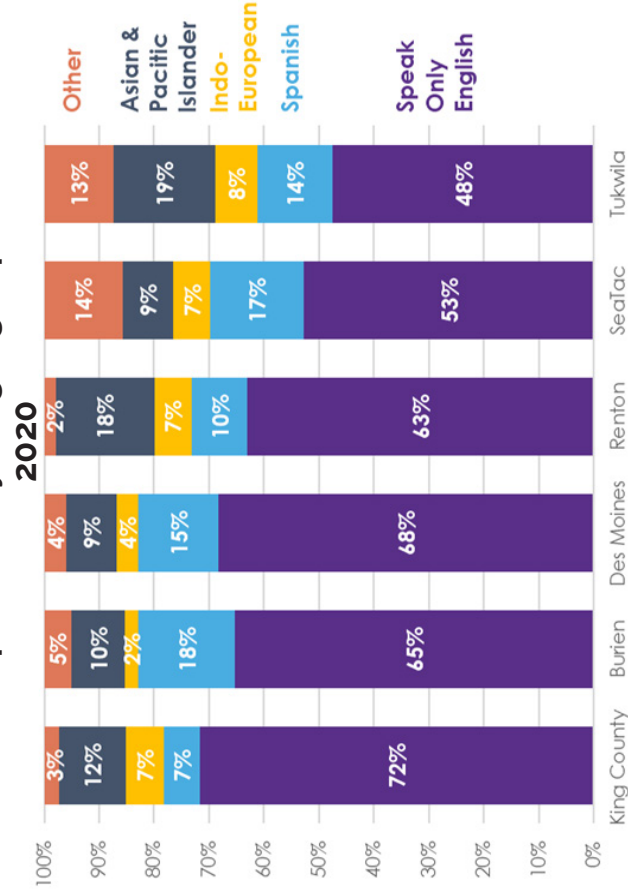
- **Tukwila has grown at an inconsistent rate** in the last 10 years, adding only 400 people in the first half of the last decade and over 2,000 people from 2015-2020
- Since 2010, Tukwila has had a declining share of people under 20, the senior population (over 65) has increased, and **millennials remain the most prevalent age group.**

**Historic and Population Growth Scenarios, Tukwila, 2010 – 2040**



Source: Office of Financial Management, 2018; CAI, 2022.

**Percent of Population by Language Spoken at Home, 2020**



Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

- Tukwila’s population continues to become more **racially and ethnically diverse** and no racial group constitutes a majority.
- Over 40% of Tukwila’s population are foreign born residents and more than half speak a language other than English at home.
- A large share of Tukwila’s population has **limited English proficiency** and many households report speaking English less than “very well.”

# Landscapes Assessment

## Household and Housing Demographics

- **Larger households** (over three-persons) account for 43% of total households in Tukwila.
- Tukwila’s households with children have declined alongside singles, while **those with seniors have grown**.
- Tukwila continues to have a very **large share of renters** (61%) relative to its comparison cities and King County (ranging from 41% to 51%).

Median Household Income, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2020



Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

Share of Cost Burdened Owners and Renters, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2015-2019



Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

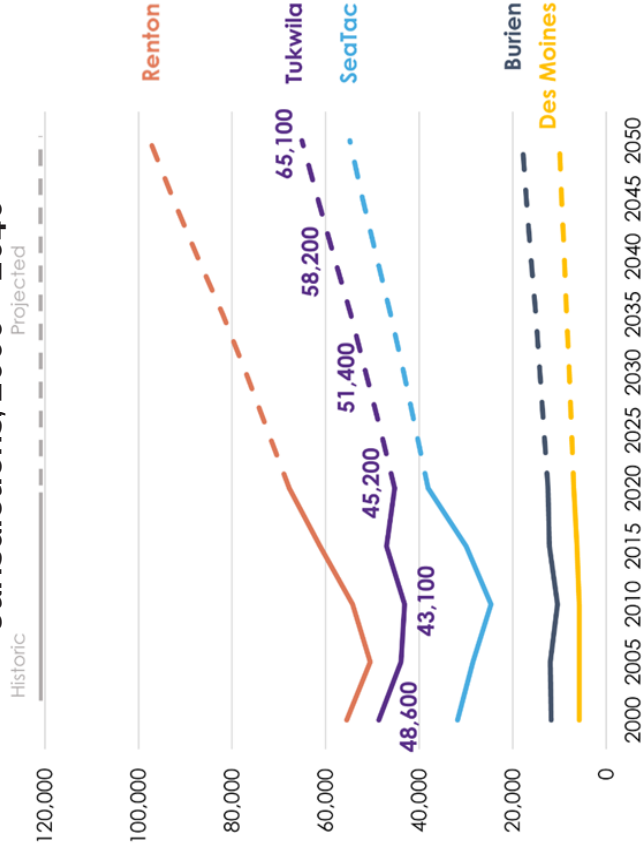
- The 2020 median household income in Tukwila (\$66,131) was significantly lower than King County (\$99,158) and most of its comparison cities, and **over one third of Tukwila’s households earn less than \$40,000 per year**.
- Close to half of Tukwila’s renters are either **cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened** (49%) while the County has a lower share.
- Over one third of surveyed households in the Seattle MSA indicated they **could face possible eviction or foreclosure** in the next two months, which may have an outsized impact on Tukwila due to the large share of both renters and cost-burdened renters present in the city.

# Market Profile

## Economic Indicators

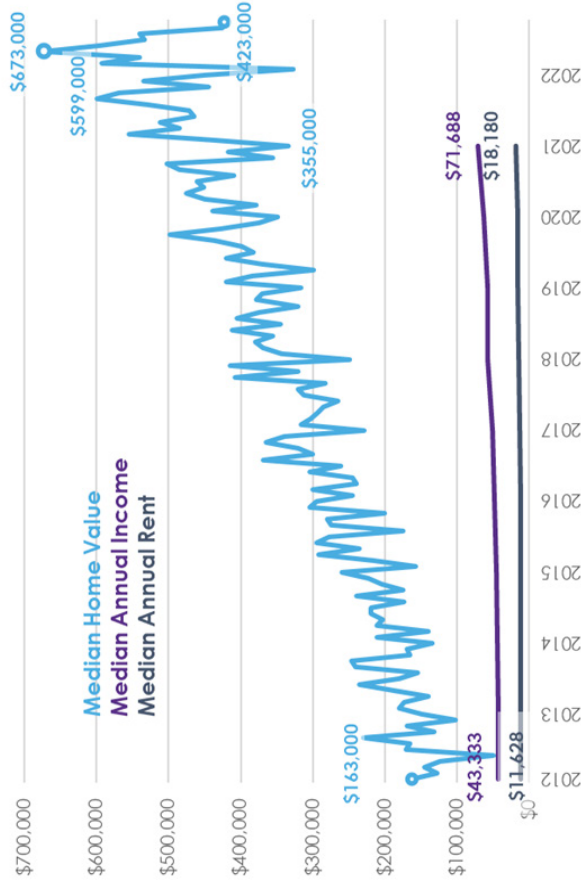
- Tukwila could add more than 20,000 jobs by 2050 if it maintains its current share of regional employment (2% of regional employment), but a decline at the same rate as 2015 to 2020 would result in 9,000 fewer jobs by 2050.
- The largest share of Tukwila’s jobs is in **Services** (35%), **Manufacturing** (18%), and **Retail** (15%) industries.
- Tukwila has a lower share of jobs in the Services sector and a higher share in **Manufacturing and Retail** relative to King County.

## Historic (2000 to 2021) and Forecast Employment (Regional Trend), Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2000 – 2040



Source: PSRC 2021; CAI, 2022.

## Housing Costs and Income Change, Tukwila, 2012 to 2022



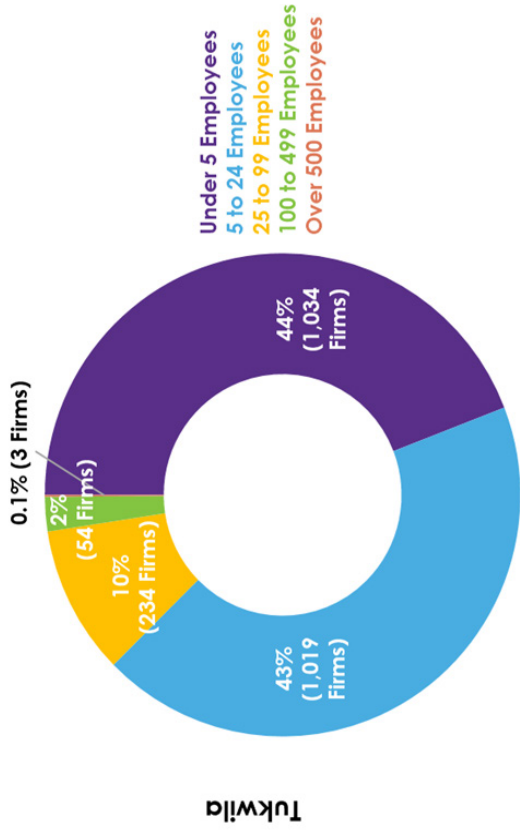
Source: Redfin, 2022; ACS, 2010-2021; CAI, 2022.

- While the rise in median incomes have largely kept pace with increasing rents, **homeownership is becoming... more unattainable**, and rents remain high for those on a limited income.
- Tukwila’s **highest growth industries** are Construction followed by FIRE, Health, and Information; Retail and Manufacturing continue to hold a high number of jobs, but Retail growth is slower, and Manufacturing has had job losses since 2010.
- Tukwila has **consistently had higher taxable retail sales** than its comparison cities, it faced significant declines from 2019 to 2020, and it has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

# Market Profile

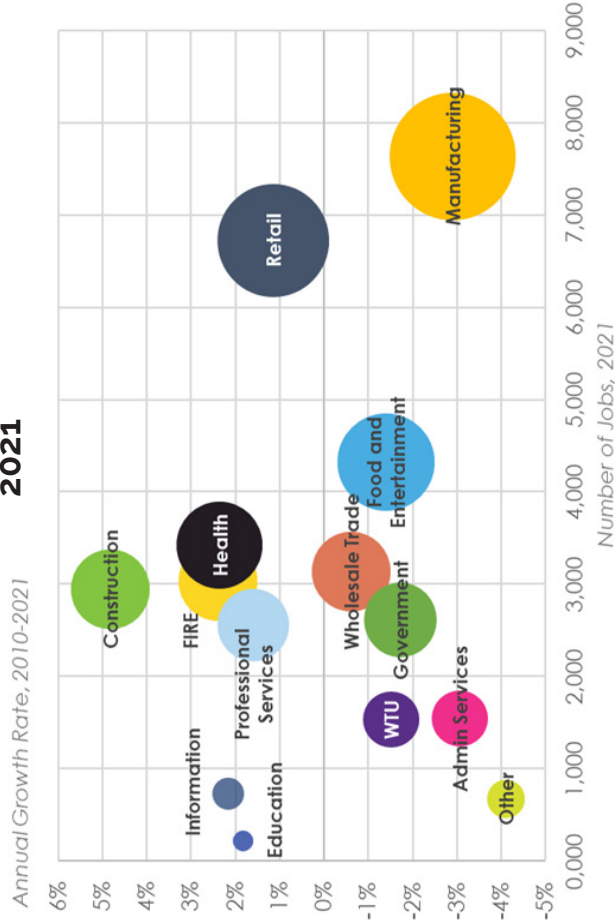
- The largest share of retail sales in Tukwila are in the **Clothing and Clothing Accessories** (\$226 million), which faced steep declines in 2020 and has not yet fully recovered.
- Around 87% of Tukwila’s businesses have **less than 25 employees** and an **average firm size of 15 employees**.
- Almost half of the businesses in Tukwila rely on **less than 10,000 square feet** and over one third use **less than 5,000 square feet** of commercial space.

## Firm Numbers and Size, Tukwila and County, 2021



Source: Esri/DataAxle, 2021; ACS, 2021; CAI, 2022.

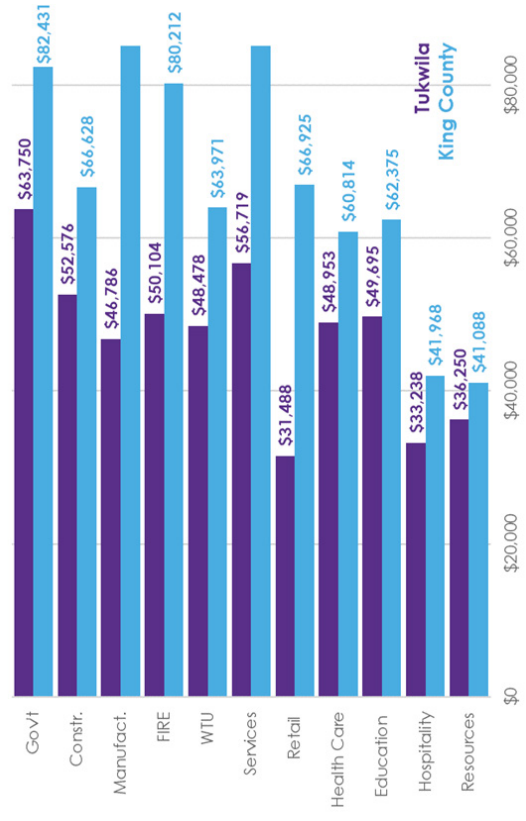
## Industry Size and Annual Growth Rate, Tukwila, 2010-2021



Source: PSRC, 2010-2021; CAI, 2022.

- **Median wages are lower in Tukwila** than King County across all industries, but the higher wage industries are Government, Services, and Construction.

## Average Median Wage by Industry, Tukwila and King County, 2020



Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

## 12 Economic Development Strategy for the City of Tukwila

# Market Profile

## Workforce Indicators

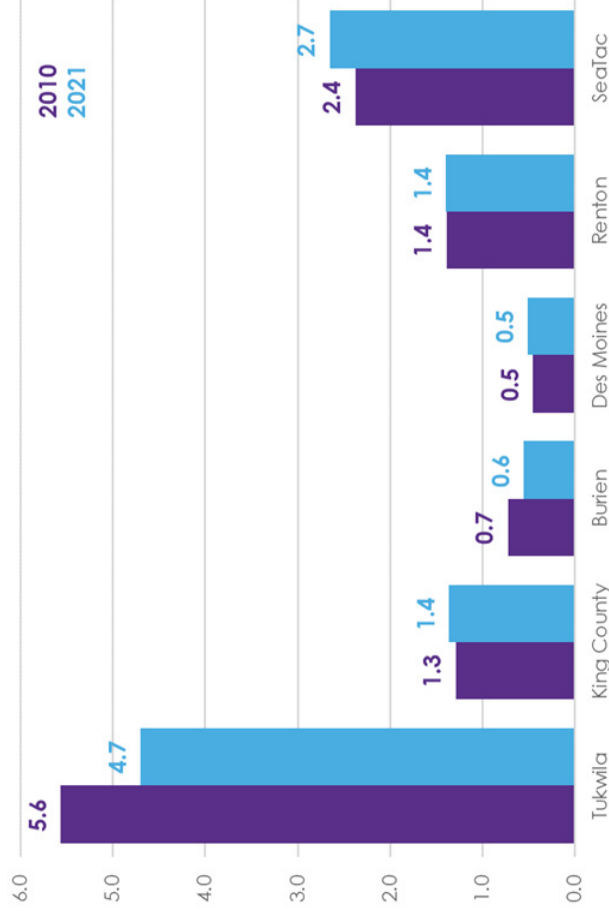
- Tukwila faces **lower education levels** relative to King County and comparison cities with one-fifth of the population 25 years old and older without High School education (20%) and less than one quarter (22%) with a bachelor's degree or above.
- Tukwila residents work in a wide range of industry sectors, and the largest share are employed in **Government**, and **Health and Education** (21%).

Resident Job Share by Industry, Tukwila and Comparison Cities, 2020



Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

Jobs-to-Housing Units Ratio, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2010 & 2021



Source: PSRC, 2010 and 2021 (jobs); OFM, 2010 and 2021 (housing units); CAI, 2022.






- Tukwila has over **four times the number of jobs as residents** despite the addition of over 1,000 housing units since 2010.
- Of the jobs in Tukwila, only 2% are filled by workers who live in Tukwila. **The largest share of workers employed in Tukwila live in Seattle** (13%) and 17% live in other cities immediately adjacent to Tukwila.
- **A large share of Tukwila residents who are in the workforce commute to Seattle** (37.5%) and adjacent cities (22.7%) for work, while 8% remain in the city for work.

# Chapter 2

## What We Heard

The planning process for Tukwila's Economic Development Strategy began with a rigorous analytic update of Tukwila's demographic, market, and economic characteristics. With a baseline of updated data, the project team turned to community and business leaders and stakeholders to help direct the development of the vision, goals, strategies and actions contained in this document.

The project team employed methods aimed at eliciting specific, actionable perspectives, ideas, and recommendations related to the economic future of Tukwila. These methods included the following:

-  Throughout the project, **Tukwila City Council and staff** guidance provided oversight, direction, and critical insights into Tukwila's current economic position and revealed issues critical to economic growth to guide analysis and strategy development.
-  Community Attributes, Inc., the project consultant, conducted numerous **interviews with businesses and stakeholders** across the Tukwila community to gain specific insight into opportunities and challenges for sustainable economic growth in Tukwila. Themes and specific actions taken from these interviews helped frame and populate the strategies and actions at the core of this plan.
-  A **project website, web-based interactive map**, and **online survey** allowed any member of the Tukwila residential and business community, including brick and mortar, online, or home-based business owners and entrepreneurs, to input directly to the city and consultants their insights and ideas for the economic future of Tukwila.
-  City staff facilitated and staffed in-person **Pop-up installation** events that introduced the project, collected surveys, and directed stakeholders to other engagement opportunities. City staff also held **listening sessions**, where Tukwila community members gave direct and in-person feedback on specific issues of economic development in Tukwila.
-  Ensuring equitable and inclusive engagement with stakeholders from all parts of Tukwila's community, the City of Tukwila **contracted engagement with local community-based organizations** to conduct engagement with specific communities.



Graphics and posters created and utilized to support engagement efforts on economic development in Tukwila

# Key Findings from Stakeholders

With the assistance of city staff, Community Attributes interviewed individuals and facilitated focus groups with businesses, entrepreneurs, residents, and stakeholders across the Tukwila community. CAI also analyzed feedback received through the city's listening sessions, contracted engagement, and through the web-based community survey. Important themes emerged that were critical to informing Tukwila's economic goals, as well as in the development of strategies and potential actions to achieve those goals. The following summarizes a number of themes, opportunities and challenges that emerged from engagement activities.

## What Makes Tukwila an Attractive Place to do Business?

### Status as a Regional Retail Destination

- > Strong retail anchors and shopping areas
- > Diverse retail offerings and experiential attractions
- > Quality businesses draw customers from across the region

### Strategic Location and Robust Infrastructure

- > Central Location Within Region
- > Connectivity with major transportation arteries
- > Proximity to Sea-Tac Airport
- > Inventory of Industrial Space

## Workforce and Business in Tukwila

### Importance and opportunities to expand Workforce Development

- > Labor shortages cause challenges across sectors
- > Support enhanced collaboration between the school system and businesses to develop a robust workforce pipeline
- > Support workforce development efforts such as adult education, certification programs, job training, etc
- > Youth in Tukwila express strong interest in more workforce development opportunities

## Establishing Tukwila's Identity

### Building Upon Tukwila's Assets

- > Highlight Tukwila's offerings: Malls and beyond
- > Increase connectivity between parks, Green river, businesses, and neighborhoods
- > Support and build upon cultural businesses, including Tukwila's notable concentration of asian-based businesses
- > Highlight Tukwila's small town atmosphere
- > Invest in family-oriented benefits and activities

### Expansion into New Sectors

- > Attract companies that support higher wages in sectors such as Technology, Aerospace, and Research and Development
- > Consider building upon existing opportunities in sectors such as manufacturing, food production, warehousing, and wholesaling
- > Invest in Culture and Arts, Healthcare, and Small businesses and Start-Ups

### Growing Tukwila's Residential Community

- > A growing residential community creates the audience to support local business
- > Attract multi-family projects and protect existing housing
- > Incentivize affordable and workforce housing
- > Employ protections against residential displacement



# Key Findings from Stakeholders

## Cultivating and Promoting a Positive Reputation for Tukwila

### A Supportive, Business-friendly Environment

- > Adopt flexible land use policies and diversify types of available land
- > Cultivate a competitive landscape for financial resources
- > Improve regulatory efficiency (permitting and inspections)

### Enhance the Perception of Tukwila as a Safe and Attractive Community

- > Invest in public safety
  - > Work to identify and address root causes of homelessness and crime
  - > Beautify Tukwila through city cleanup, addressing building disrepair, and urban design strategies
  - > Host engaging and attractive cultural and community events
- Support diversification of food offerings in Tukwila

## Upcoming Economic Trends and Opportunities in Tukwila

### Development Opportunities

- > Development of Former Boeing Longacres area
- > Potential development in Tukwila South
- > Potential redevelopment around existing malls

### Other Economic Trends

- > Shift to higher Electric Vehicle usage in the region
- > Common ground between low-income and high-income groups in areas of safety, access, and affordability

## Investing in and Supporting Tukwila's Multi-cultural Community

### Trust Building with Communities of Color

- > Ensure equitable opportunities
- > Collaborate with trusted community stakeholders
- > Employ translation services and cultural competency

### Building Out Wrap-Around Services in Tukwila

- > Attract full-service grocers
- > Locate culturally competent urgent care facilities
- > Local need for Child Care
- > Invest in community beneficial social services
- > Open up community gathering spaces

### Build Up Community Supportive Infrastructure

- > Prioritize transportation improvements for pedestrians, bikers, and public transportation users
- > Invest in Tukwila's parking with lighting, ADA accessibility improvements and expansion of public recreation space

## Supporting Small Business in Tukwila

### Targeted support for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

- > Address limited supply of affordable commercial or retail space options
- > Support navigation of evolving regulations and local ordinances
- > Utilize language barrier and financial literacy programs

# Public Comment Tool

Community Attributes Inc. and the City of Tukwila wanted to hear the community's ideas on Tukwila's future economic development and ways to encourage business investment. Dozens of comments collected through the website [www.tukwila.gov/departments/economic-development/economic-development-strategy/](http://www.tukwila.gov/departments/economic-development/economic-development-strategy/), along with other outreach, helped identify salient issues and themes, culminating in project goals, strategies and actions for future economic development initiatives.

## Mapping Ideas

Using the interactive map, participants submitted ideas about Tukwila and assigned those comments with markers to specific locations on the map.

## The Community Map

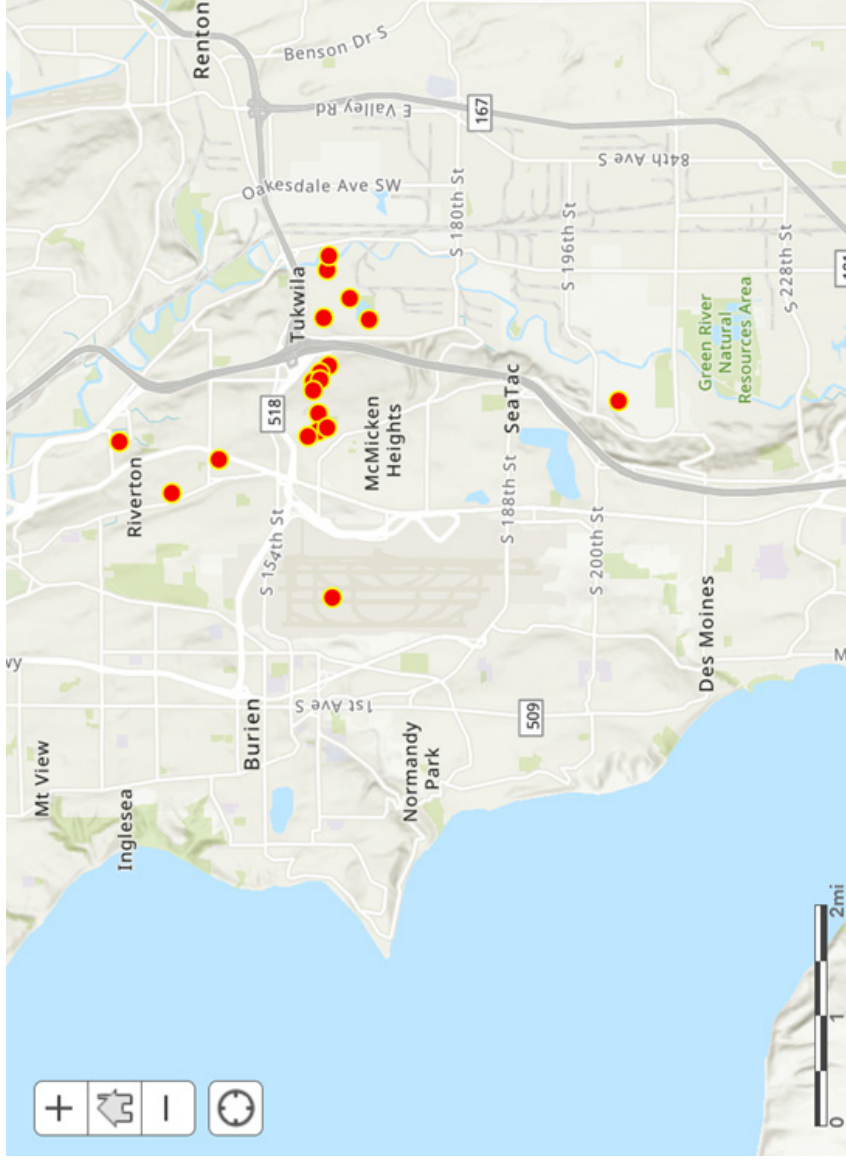
Participants explored the community map and viewed map icons to see individual comments.

## Accessibility

The project website, interactive map, and survey provided links to translation to multiple languages, including Spanish, French, Amharic, Burmese, Nepali, Chinese, Somali, Swahili, and Vietnamese.

**Utilize the river as an amenity for businesses and residents throughout Southcenter. This will attract people to establish businesses and to live in Tukwila.**

- Tukwila Resident, from Public Comment Tool, 2023



**A Community Garden would be amazing here.**

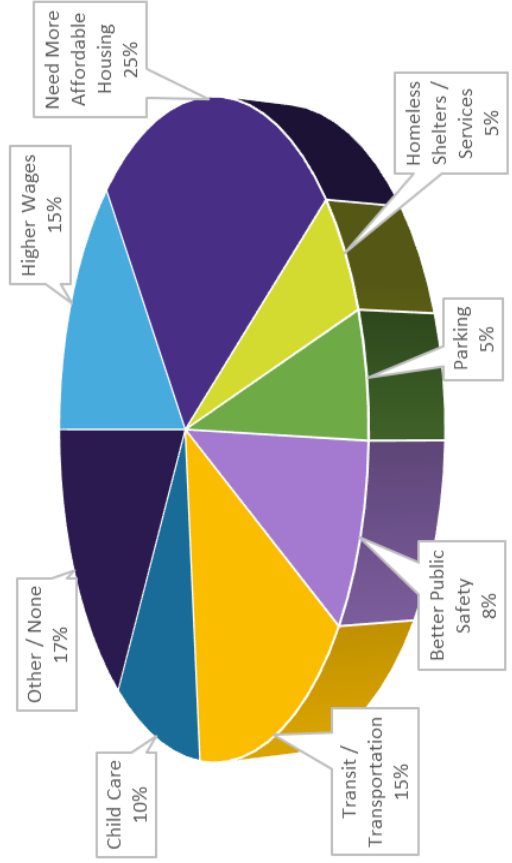
- Tukwila Resident, from Public Comment Tool, 2023

# Online Survey

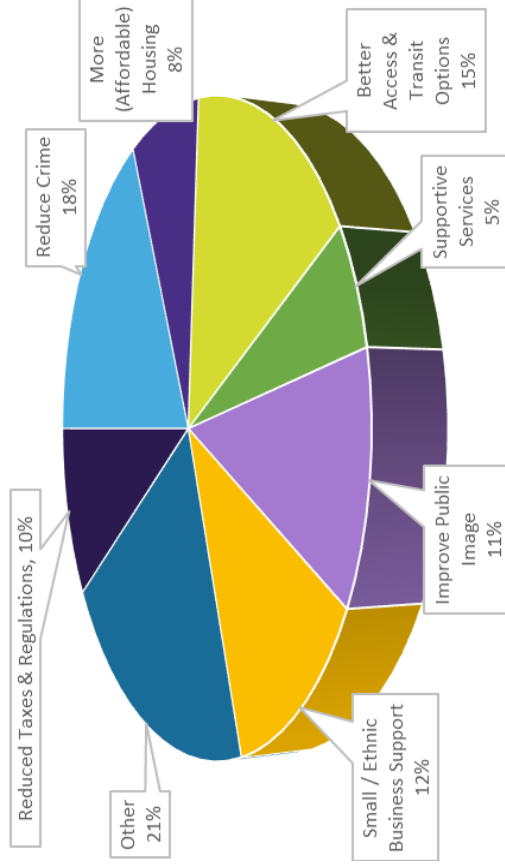
Community Attributes Inc. and the City of Tukwila wanted to hear the community's ideas on Tukwila's future economic development and ways to encourage business investment. Over 80 responses to an online survey along with other outreach, helped identify salient issues and themes, culminating in project goals, strategies and actions for future economic development initiatives. 94% of respondents live and/or work in Tukwila and the top 3 neighborhoods represented were Foster (19%), Tukwila Hill (13%), and McMicken (11%).

- To **support existing businesses and workers**, Tukwila must reduce crime, improve transit access, improve public image of the city, reduce taxes & regulations, and produce more affordable housing.
- **Strengths and opportunities** for Tukwila's business economy include its multiculturalism and diversity, Southcenter Mall and experiential retail offerings, its location and Sea-Tac Airport, and the Sounder and mass transit options.
- **Weaknesses and challenges** for Tukwila's business economy include crime, homelessness and drug use; low

## What are Tukwila workers' greatest challenges, issues, or needs? (For example, income, housing, childcare, or transportation.)



## How could we improve Tukwila to better support our businesses and workers?



wages / high cost of living; auto-reliance; lack of support for immigrants and minorities; burdensome taxes, and permitting and regulation.

- The greatest **workforce development** needs for Tukwila are better access to educational opportunities, adult learning opportunities, language training, technology / STEM training, business skill training, and trades and apprenticeships.
- Tukwila's greatest **economic challenges**, issues, or needs include providing more affordable housing, high wage jobs, better transit / transportation options, better public safety, more parking, and more homeless shelters / social services.

# Chapter 3

## Goals, Strategies & Actions

# Navigating this Document

The following section presents the **Goals, Strategies, and Actions** aimed at diversifying, growing, and sustaining Tukwila's economy for the next ten years and beyond. The strategies and actions aimed at achieving each goal benefit Tukwila's economic foundations, but also focus on specific areas of focus that hold particular promise for Tukwila. The section also presents supporting information to facilitate implementation, including illustrations, case studies, and Tukwila successes to date.

The plan contains 5 **goals** around which the **strategies** and **actions** are organized. Color-coded titles distinguish each Goal section.

Individual **strategies** correspond to each goal with like colors. Strategies represent a cohesive approach to achieving a goal and consist of a number of specific, inter-related Actions.

**Actions** are examples of specific, implementable tactical measures where the practical work can take place. They are aspirational, contingent upon resources. In this Strategy, Actions are organized numerically.

On selected pages, **other potential actions** are included to support or further illustrate recommended Actions.

## *Strategy 1B:* **Maintain support for and strengthen Tukwila's robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sectors**

### **Action 1B.1**

Continue and grow the Experience Tukwila program to proactively market shopping, dining, and entertainment options available in Tukwila through targeted social media posts and individual business highlights in appropriate forums.

### **Action 1B.2**

Continue supporting Explore Seattle Southside to market activities and amenities that actively promote Tukwila to business travelers and tourists and leverage Tukwila's location to SeaTac airport to attract overnight stays and layover breaks.

### **Action 1B.3**

Support events, activities, pop-ups, and temporary markets that activate public spaces and underutilized parking lots and contribute buzz and energy to surrounding commercial districts.

### **Action 1B.4**

Promote the Tukwila International Boulevard neighborhood as an authentic, international district welcoming to visitors



# Summary of Goals

- goal 1** A vibrant, diverse, and resilient economy
- goal 2** A safe and desirable community with a positive identity
- goal 3** Prosperity and opportunity for businesses, workers, and residents
- goal 4** A supportive environment for small business and entrepreneurs
- goal 5** A community that celebrates and invites diversity

# Summary of Strategies

## goal 1 A vibrant, diverse, and resilient economy

- Strategy 1A:* Attract and retain office, research & development, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food manufacturing, technology and life sciences businesses
- Strategy 1B:* Maintain support for and strengthen Tukwila's robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sectors
- Strategy 1C:* Collaborate with the private sector to leverage catalytic development sites
- Strategy 1D:* Implement the adopted long-term plans for Tukwila International Boulevard and the Southcenter District, with an emphasis on walkability, placemaking, and community gathering opportunities
- Strategy 1E:* Build and maintain relationships with property owners and businesses

---

## goal 2 A safe and desirable community with a positive identity

- Strategy 2A:* Improve perceptions of public safety through crime reduction, visible enforcement, improved communications, and messaging
- Strategy 2B:* Invest in placemaking efforts that instill community pride, improve quality of life, and welcome visitors to our dynamic community
- Strategy 2C:* Promote positive aspects of the Tukwila community to the region

## goal 3 Prosperity and opportunity for businesses, workers, and residents

*Strategy 3A:* Improve workers access to education and workforce development resources

*Strategy 3B:* Connect employers with education and workforce development organizations

## goal 4 A supportive environment for small business and entrepreneurs

*Strategy 4A:* Where possible, ease regulations that challenge small businesses

*Strategy 4B:* Ensure that business and entrepreneurial resources are accessible to all, including businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants

*Strategy 4C:* Ensure that Tukwila projects an 'open for business' culture

## goal 5 A community that celebrates and invites diversity

*Strategy 5A:* Promote business diversity by signaling public sector support

*Strategy 5B:* Provide crucial technical support and regulatory relief where feasible for small businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants

*Strategy 5C:* Seek to understand the dynamics, needs, and relationships that characterize the minority and immigrant owned business community in Tukwila



# goal 1 A vibrant, diverse, and resilient economy

Continue to strengthen and balance economic and workforce development with strategic housing growth in Tukwila to ensure an adaptable and diverse economic base that leverages Tukwila's many assets and ensures the city's financial stability.

## *Strategy 1A:* **Attract and retain office, research & development, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food manufacturing, technology and life sciences businesses**

### **Action 1A.1**

In the course of outreach to local businesses, assess the degree to which adopted zoning (and related standards) support business operations and streamline requirements that provide little benefit.

### **Action 1A.2**

Promote Tukwila to the priority business subsectors by building relationships with key firms and understanding their land, facility, infrastructure, and workforce needs.

### **Action 1A.3**

Actively assist businesses that confer strong net financial benefit to Tukwila's municipal revenue streams.

## *Strategy 1B:* **Maintain support for and strengthen Tukwila's robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sectors**

### **Action 1B.1**

Continue and grow the Experience Tukwila program to proactively market shopping, dining, and entertainment options available in Tukwila through targeted social media posts and individual business highlights in appropriate forums.

### **Action 1B.2**

Continue supporting Explore Seattle Southside to market activities and amenities that actively promote Tukwila to business travelers and tourists and leverage Tukwila's location to SeaTac airport to attract overnight stays and layover breaks.

**Action 1B.3**

Support events, activities, pop-ups, and temporary markets that activate public spaces and underutilized parking lots and contribute buzz and energy to surrounding commercial districts.

**Action 1B.4**

Promote the Tukwila International Boulevard neighborhood as an authentic, international district welcoming to visitors.



*Strategy 1C:* **Collaborate with the private sector to leverage catalytic development sites**

**Action 1C.1**

Inventory all major developable or redevelopable sites in Tukwila, gathering information on ownership, zoning, and known development constraints.

### **Action 1C.2**

Prepare criteria for the development of publicly owned sites that may be available for future disposition.

### **Action 1C.3**

Work with the landowner to review and adjust, as necessary, the Tukwila South development agreement to ensure the vision for this important site is realized.

### **Action 1C.4**

Consider incentives and other tools such as the multi-family property tax exemption (MFTE) or tax increment financing (TIF) to incentivize private investment and new development that is compatible with the city's vision.

### **Action 1C.5**

Continue to partner with the King County Flood Control District, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and private property owners, to monitor, maintain, and improve Tukwila's levee systems and banks on the Green and Duwamish Rivers.

## *Strategy 1D:*

# **Implement the adopted long-term plans for Tukwila International Boulevard and the Southcenter District, with an emphasis on walkability, placemaking, and community gathering opportunities**

### **Action 1D.1**

Seek opportunities to improve the experience in the Southcenter District, such as improving the public experience of Tukwila Pond Park; improving Baker Boulevard as a festival street; creating better pedestrian experiences; and connecting Westfield Southcenter to the commuter train station.

### **Action 1D.2**

Seek opportunities to improve the Tukwila International Boulevard neighborhood by creating a walkable, pedestrian friendly experience along the Boulevard, incentivizing development on the Boulevard, leveraging the sale of city property for catalyst development, and fostering the international experience for visitors.

## *Strategy 1E:*

### **Build and maintain relationships with property owners and businesses**

#### **Action 1E.1**

Create a robust and sustainable business contacts database for the city and utilize it to track, schedule, and monitor engagement and “touches” with Tukwila businesses and entrepreneurs.

#### **Action 1E.2**

Conduct a business outreach program that can act as an effective feedback loop for city policies, programs, and regulations and can address needs, challenges, and opportunities for individual businesses and sectors alike.

#### **Action 1E.2**

Facilitate and participate in networking opportunities between the city and local and regional businesses.

# goal 2 A safe and desirable community with a positive identity

Enhance Tukwila’s public safety perceptions and sense of place and support a positive identity as a city in which to “Live, Work, Stay and Play” – a community of choice for businesses, residents and visitors with outstanding transportation, quality housing, fun experiences, amenities, and supportive services.

## *Strategy 2A:* **Improve perceptions of public safety through crime reduction, visible enforcement, improved communications, and messaging**

### **Action 2A.1**

Communicate positive crime statistics across multiple channels, including formally and informally via city contacts with partners and communities.

### **Action 2A.2**

Support Tukwila Police Department in their recruiting and crime reduction public engagement efforts such as National Night Out.

### **Action 2A.3**

Advocate strongly for fiscal sustainability policies that add budget capacity for public safety including hiring, programming, reporting, and equity training.

### **Action 2A.4**

Continue and expand engagement between the community and Police Department to build stronger relationships and trust.

### **Action 2A.5**

Invite key property owners and businesses to collaborate on public safety measures such as private security, information sharing, and property management practices.

### **Action 2A.6**

Consider creating a business improvement area in the Southcenter District to assist with additional public safety initiatives.

*Strategy 2B:* **Invest in placemaking efforts that instill community pride, improve quality of life, and welcome visitors to our dynamic community**

**Action 2B.1**

Continue and seek to scale up public and private art, such as murals and the utility box paintings.

**Action 2B.2**

Seek opportunities to leverage enjoyment of the Green River Trail and the river itself for economic development.

**Action 2B.3**

Seek opportunities to improve Tukwila Pond for public enjoyment.

**Action 2B.4**

Support and attract businesses that provide fun and positive experiences and build on synergy with existing businesses.

**Action 2B.5**

Consider assessing the feasibility of adding new and additional streetlights throughout the city.

*Strategy 2C:* **Promote positive aspects of the Tukwila community to the region**

**Action 2C.1**

Continue and expand the Experience Tukwila social media and sponsorships program.

### **Action 2C.2**

Support and expand Tukwila’s family friendly activities hosted by the city, partners, and outside organizations.

### **Action 2C.3**

Celebrate the dynamic diversity of Tukwila’s business community to draw new market share regionally to unique offerings in street food, niche and experiential retail, and events.

### **Action 2C.4**

Continue and strengthen relationships with Tukwila-based organizations with positive public relations reputations such as the OL Reign, Seawolves, and Starfire.

# goal 3 Prosperity and opportunity for businesses, workers, and residents

Expand avenues of durable economic success, including workforce development resources, for workers, entrepreneurs, business owners, and residents in Tukwila with a focus on shared prosperity, opportunity, and social responsibility for local communities.

## *Strategy 3A:* **Improve workers access to education and workforce development resources**

### **Action 3A.1**

Dedicate staff time to participate in workforce development and network with workforce partners.

### **Action 3A.2**

Vocally advocate for and promote Tukwila’s specific needs to workforce development organizations.

### **Action 3A.3**

Create and maintain an online directory of organizations and services in Tukwila providing workforce development, language training, internship and apprenticeship opportunities, and employment assistance.

### **Action 3A.4**

Promote workforce development opportunities, including training, workshops, education, and resources, directly to Tukwila residents.



## *Strategy 3B:* **Connect employers with education and workforce development organizations**

### **Action 3B.1**

Consider organizing an event series to connect high school counselors and teachers to local industry representatives in high-growth and / or target sectors, such as biotech, media arts, and others.

### **Action 3B.2**

Leverage the success of the Tukwila School District's Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs by expanding student recruitment and program offerings, and by providing networking assistance to local employers, or otherwise connecting CTE teachers with private sector contacts.

### **Action 3B.3**

Connect with local employers' human resources staff to understand their needs and connect them with workforce development organizations.

## goal 4 A supportive environment for small business and entrepreneurs

Maintain a strong, supportive environment for local, independent, small, and micro-businesses and the entrepreneurial ecosystem to ensure they continue to flourish in Tukwila while attracting new business activities to the city.

### *Strategy 4A:* **Where possible, ease regulations that challenge small businesses**

#### **Action 4A.1**

Consider augmenting signage regulations to allow greater flexibility of expression, branding, and identity in business signage.

#### **Action 4A.2**

Encourage the founding and development of home-based, virtual, mobile, and / or pop-up businesses that don't require brick-and-mortar locations with incentives and / or other city support.

### *Strategy 4B:* **Ensure that business and entrepreneurial resources are accessible to all, including businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants**

#### **Action 4B.1**

Continue and expand support for technical assistance consulting services to guide small businesses on matters ranging from taxes, business loans, permitting, lease negotiation, and hiring.

#### **Action 4B.2**

Seek out and promote resources around no-interest funding models for small businesses.

### **Action 4B.3**

Translate key small business materials into languages present in the Tukwila community and stress-test translations with community partners.

### **Action 4B.4**

Support small businesses to create social media and other online digital presence.

### **Action 4B.5**

Consider creating an incubator space for small businesses that are supported by private sector venture capital.

#### **Other Potential Actions:**

- Identify partners, sites, and financing avenues to develop community small-business and entrepreneur facilities such as commissary kitchens, maker spaces, community tool sheds, and others.

## *Strategy 4C:* **Ensure that Tukwila projects an ‘open for business’ culture**

### **Action 4C.1**

Develop a communication strategy to emphasize the city’s accessibility to its business community.

### **Action 4C.2**

Identify and track metrics related to permitting and entitlements timelines and work toward continuous improvement.

### **Action 4C.3**

Help all city departments embrace a business-friendly culture while also maintaining a resident friendly culture.

## goal 5 A community that celebrates and invites diversity

Foster a community in Tukwila that welcomes and empowers residential and business diversity in all its forms while capturing increased market share and building resilience to economic shocks.

### *Strategy 5A:* **Promote business diversity by signaling public sector support**

#### **Action 5A.1**

Celebrate Tukwila's diversity through targeted support, asset development, and promotion.

#### **Action 5A.2**

Highlight & promote a rotating roster of individual minority and immigrant-owned small businesses in Tukwila's existing social media communications.

### *Strategy 5B:* **Provide crucial technical support and regulatory relief where feasible for small businesses owned by historically marginalized people, refugees, and immigrants**

#### **Action 5B.1**

Educate and connect minority and immigrant-owned businesses on the availability of grant and low- to no-interest loan programs at local, state, and federal levels.

#### **Action 5B.2**

Evaluate Tukwila's business license fee, business and occupations tax, development impact fees and consider other revenue sources such as a transportation benefit district to determine if the taxes and fees can be simplified and improved.

*Strategy 5C:* **Seek to understand the dynamics, needs, and relationships that characterize the minority and immigrant owned business community in Tukwila**

**Action 5C.1**

Identify resources and support to continue to cultivate ethnic shopping districts, including cuisine, and pursue recognition as a world-class street food destination.

**Action 5C.2**

Survey minority and immigrant-owned small businesses to identify which culturally relevant business services the city should provide to small business owners in Tukwila.

**Action 5C.3**

Engage with the Equity and Social Justice Commission, social organizations, and faith organizations to build relationships and understand economic gaps and resource constraints among the minority and immigrant owned business community in Tukwila.





# Tukwila Economic Development Strategy Community Engagement Report

*October 30, 2023*

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Purpose**

The City of Tukwila is creating an economic development strategy as a part of its upcoming update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. A vital part of the economic development strategy is equitable and inclusive engagement with stakeholders throughout Tukwila to inform strategy recommendations to advance the City’s economic goals and objectives. This document provides a summary of engagement activities undertaken and findings gathered and synthesized thus far from October 2022 through July of 2023. The activities, findings and recommendations described in this document will be thoroughly integrated into ongoing analyses and become a core driver of the economic development strategies and actions at the heart of this work.

### **Organization of This Report**

**Methodology** provides a description of the strategies implemented as part of the engagement process.

**Summary of Findings** serves as a comprehensive overview of feedback received thus far throughout the engagement process.

**Findings by Engagement Type** summarizes stakeholder engagement activities feedback by engagement activity.

**Appendix** contains detailed engagement activity content and individual responses, as well as technical analyses.

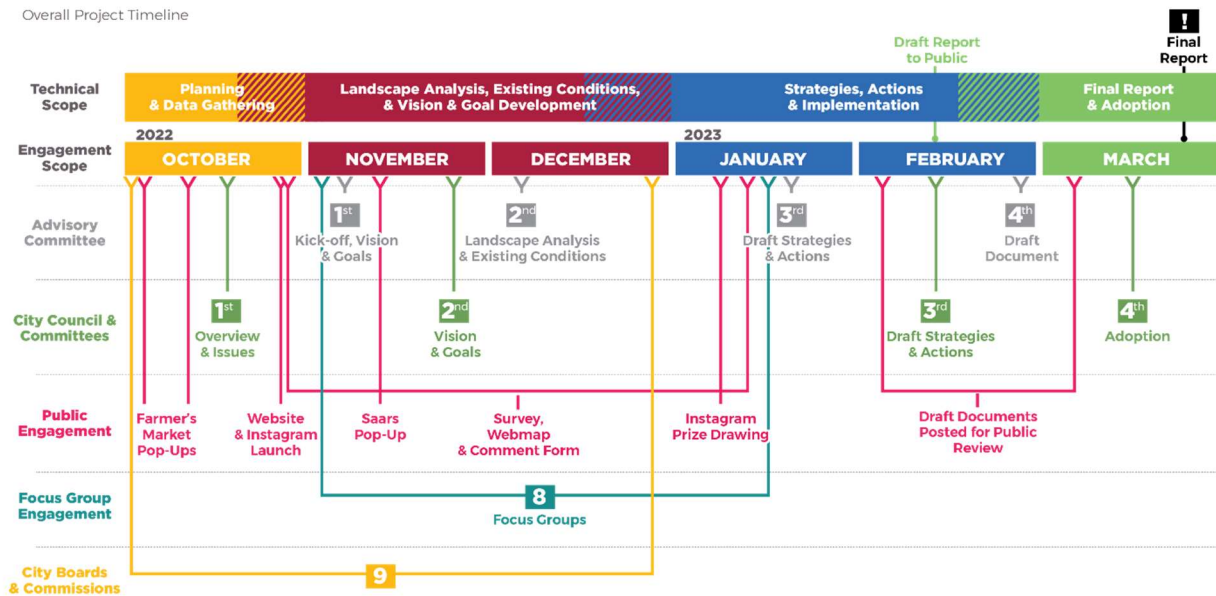
## METHODOLOGY

The engagement plan for the City of Tukwila’s economic development strategy included City Council and advisory committee meetings, a project website and interactive map with branded graphic content, listening sessions, contracts with local organizations, interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. Participants for these were identified with the support of City of Tukwila staff. These engagement activities provided participants with an opportunity to provide detailed, unique, and in-depth perspectives on the city, and region.

The stakeholders consisted of residents, property owners, renters, public and private sector workers, business owners and managers, members of City boards and commissions, and individuals from similar community or industry interests

and/or diverse representation to speak to common issues. Interview participants were selected that had a unique perspective on economic development in Tukwila and the region. In addition, five focus groups solicited additional detailed feedback on specific key topics including economic diversification, workforce development, retail and entertainment, identity and marketing, and small business and entrepreneurship.

In the early months of the project, a graphic timeline was created to visually summarize planned engagement activities and their coordination with EDS data analyses and plan development phases. The project was paused in February, extending or delaying some activities, including the focus groups.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Key findings represent the diverse and interconnected priorities of the Tukwila community, providing valuable insights into the city's economy and community. They are aggregated across engagement type and listed below.

- Tukwila's status as a retail destination, with various strong anchors, is a driving force behind its economic vitality.** Diverse retail and entertainment offerings in Tukwila draw a significant volume of traffic and position the city as a regional retail hub in South King County. Additionally, the city's strategic location near Seattle and major transportation arteries, including I-5 and the airport, further enhances its attractiveness to businesses. Tukwila's inventory of industrial space also stands out as a compelling factor, attracting enterprises in warehousing and wholesaling sectors. Residents also identify tourism, large employers and Tukwila's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services office as major economic strengths.



- **Tukwila's welcoming, multi-cultural, and multi-generational community is an opportunity to build upon what people already love about Tukwila.** Tukwila's community is described as tight-knit, diverse, multi-cultural, welcoming, inter-generational, and family-friendly. Many participants wished to expand upon Tukwila's family-friendly atmosphere by investing in family-oriented benefits and activities.
- **Establishing a clear identity for Tukwila, encompassing more than its shopping malls, is considered essential for sustainable economic development.** Initiatives like tax increment financing (TIF) were suggested by stakeholders as a potential way to connect the city's assets, including the river, businesses, and parks, creating a more cohesive community and business environment. Tukwila is also urged to explore new sectors and markets, such as food processing or general service industries, to take advantage of its central location and proximity to the Kent Valley. Attracting tech companies and high-end multifamily projects is contingent on addressing concerns related to identity, market appeal, and zoning options. Residents in Tukwila wished to **expand upon Tukwila's family-friendly atmosphere** by investing in family-oriented benefits and activities and suggested bringing in more attractions and events to Tukwila.
- **Engagement efforts highlight the importance of building trust with communities of color through consistency, collaboration with trusted community stakeholders, and ensuring equitable opportunities.** Effective engagement strategies included the use of QR codes, translation of surveys, and collaboration with community-based organizations. There was also a call for dedicated sections on equity in city plans. Suggested ways to further engage and build trust with communities of color included translation services, cultural competency, and collaboration with community-based organizations were suggested.
- **The business and residential community in Tukwila describe the importance of intentional land use and housing development for future economic vitality in Tukwila.** Stakeholders feel that future development in Tukwila is dependent on residential growth that will support business activity. Concerns about housing affordability and displacement were highlighted as stakeholders expressed desire for more affordable and workforce housing, protection against residential displacement, and housing for different demographic groups.
- **Housing affordability and residential anti-displacement strategies were top concerns for Tukwila residents.** Residents in Tukwila describe a need for more affordable and workforce housing in Tukwila. Larger housing units, such as those with 3 or 4 bedrooms are particularly in demand, as is housing for artists, and trailer park units. Displacement, a major concern especially near Tukwila School District, is also an equity concern for underserved communities, refugees and immigrants.
- **The business community in Tukwila desires to improve the city's image as a business-friendly environment when compared to**

**neighboring cities.** Attracting and retaining businesses through a supportive environment is a priority to businesses in Tukwila. Tukwila's inherent advantages, such as its strategic location, robust infrastructure, and substantial daytime population, are identified as key assets that can be leveraged to bolster its appeal to businesses. However, concerns about the competitive landscape for financial resources, such as taxes and bonds, cast a shadow over the city's ability to support for-profit developers. Other topics of importance for supporting the local business community were diversifying types of available land and adopting flexible land use policies.

- **Small businesses in Tukwila face a unique set of challenges, including the affordability of commercial rent and limited space options.** Small businesses in Tukwila stress the importance of affordable, small commercial spaces for local businesses to prevent commercial displacement, especially for minority-owned businesses and mom-and-pop retail. Stakeholders call for strategic support for small businesses to prevent commercial displacement and to assist navigation of regulations and ordinances. This could involve more comprehensive education and outreach programs to help these businesses adapt, as well as considering potential exemptions from certain regulations to ensure their sustainability. Entrepreneurs, particularly in the food industry, sought support in navigating bureaucracy.
- **The business community in Tukwila also describes challenges associated with the city's permitting processes and regulatory efficiency.** Of particular concern are issues related to inspectors' activities and the timing of responsibilities for tenants and landlords. Delays and miscommunication during permitting can lead to significant resource wastage, ultimately hampering economic development efforts within the city.
- **Tukwila employers grapple with the challenges of finding and retaining skilled labor.** High cost of business coupled with a labor shortage poses significant hurdles across various sectors. Stakeholders highlight the importance of increasing Tukwila's residential population and developing a robust workforce pipeline for the city's economic growth. The business community suggests that enhancing collaboration between the school system and businesses, particularly through programs like CorePlus Aerospace, could prove instrumental in supporting Tukwila's economic development initiatives. Opportunities for adult education, job training, and certifications programs were deemed important for connecting existing residents with higher-paying jobs while language barriers and financial literacy were identified as challenges for some of Tukwila's labor force.
- **Workforce development that connects residents with higher paying jobs, or prepares refugees and immigrants to enter the labor force, was a strong priority for many residents in Tukwila as well.** There is a desire for adult education, job training, apprenticeships or internships, certifications programs, and other, even more ambitious suggestions. Youth in Tukwila expressed a strong interest in more educational and recreational opportunities, such as teen centers, community centers, and job fairs.

- **At the same time, Tukwila’s communities of color, including immigrants, are concerned with underemployment and show a significant desire to engage in entrepreneurship.** POC workers describe discrimination at work, language barriers, inaccessible government jobs, and qualification barriers. Minority entrepreneurs also face challenges when navigating the business licensing, permitting, and financial landscape. Community members often seek flexible funds that can be used for various business activities. The POC community describes a need for more low level-of-entry jobs, jobs for artisans, support for family businesses, and jobs for teens.
- **Public safety in Tukwila is a concern to local businesses and residents alike, with theft and violence posing substantial challenges.** The need to enhance the overall perception of Tukwila as a safe and attractive community is a recurring theme in the business and residential community. Residents supported more social services in Tukwila, shelters for the homeless, and mental and behavioral health programs, while also discussing the importance of cross-cultural competency in healthcare services. Along with addressing homelessness, drug use, and crime, stakeholders expressed a desire to make Tukwila “feel” more safe, through beautification strategies. These included addressing building disrepair, addressing vacant and unsafe buildings, urban design concepts, and city cleanup efforts.
- **Tukwila residents emphasized the need for wrap-around services including social service agencies, health care facilities, and grocery stores, as well as community support such as social service agencies and community gathering spaces.** Residents across engagement platforms describe a desire for more community gathering spaces in Tukwila. These spaces could serve various purposes, including cultural events, meetings, and activities for different age groups. Health care and urgent care was also a particularly poignant desire from residents in Tukwila. For groceries, residents describe a need for fresh, affordable, and organic options and many wish for a full-service grocer.
- **Tukwila residents also desire additional investment in infrastructure, including transportation improvements and park and recreation enhancements.** Requests for bus stop shelters, pedestrian crosswalks, and addressing issues related to car speeds and dangerous intersections were collected. Young Tukwila residents also expressed interest in better transit connectivity and improvements in the city's buses and light rail. Also popular were improvements to Crystal Springs Park, with requests for lighting, expansion, and ADA accessibility. Community gardens and the need for more parks and recreational spaces, including soccer fields and basketball courts, were also mentioned.
- Tukwila’s POC community in particular prioritizes **increasing the number of school buses, supporting grocery stores that serve multi-cultural food, investing in cultural centers and open spaces near apartments, increasing street lights, programs to help communities of color**

**navigate social and economic systems, affordable child care, and targeted employment support.**

- On economic trends and development opportunities in Tukwila, stakeholders mention trends towards **higher quantities of electric vehicles**, the **development** of the former Boeing Longacres area, and the potential for **investment in Tukwila South**.

## FINDINGS BY ENGAGEMENT TYPE

The following section lists key themes from various stakeholders, organized by the engagement activity.

### **Advisory Committee & City Council and Committee Meetings**

A Tukwila Economic Development Strategy Advisory Committee (AC) was convened and met three times in order to provide high-level direction to the development of the strategy and review in-progress work and engagement activities. The members of the Advisory Committee reflect multiple backgrounds and experiences with close ties to Tukwila such as residents, shopping center owner/developer, multi-family residential management, Chamber of Commerce, workforce development, youth, and a former city councilmember. The members are:

- Keith Hubrath
- Annie McGrath
- Dennis Bao Nguyen
- Verna Seal
- Ginney To
- Leshya Wig

The Advisory Committee was asked to provide general oversight to ensure the creation of the Economic Development Strategy was not missing important components or stakeholders. The Committee was not asked to approve or reach consensus on the Strategy's vision, goals, strategies and actions. The Advisory Committee has contributed insights, ideas, and direction to the planning process for the Tukwila EDS and raised specific issues, such as public safety and the need for specific types and locations of housing, for consideration and incorporation. In addition, the AC helped develop and refine the five goals, and craft their language, that will drive forthcoming strategy development.

In addition to the Advisory Committee, the Planning and Community Development (PCD) Committee of the Tukwila City Council has met twice – in October and December of 2022 – to hear progress on the project and submit questions and comments about the process. Many of the PCD Committee's questions and comments were around common, related themes, including: how to set the City apart from others; how to invest in and leverage Tukwila's diversity;

how to strengthen Tukwila’s infrastructure; how to make the City’s finances – especially revenue – more sustainable; how to improve and communicate public safety; how to support workers; how to expand housing units and types; and how to enhance public spaces to the benefit of the economy.

## Online Survey

Early in the project timeline, an online survey was drafted by CAI, in collaboration with the City, to gather high-level, strategic perceptions and ideas related to Tukwila’s economy and industries. The survey was made publicly accessible from October of 2022 through July of 2023 via the project website and / or a QR code posted in public places (actual QR code at right), including at pop-up and other engagement events facilitated by City of Tukwila staff. It contained questions pertaining to Tukwila’s current economy, as well as visions for its economic future. Survey questions were translated with different language options available, including Spanish, French, Amharic, Burmese, Nepali, Chinese, Somali, Swahili, and Vietnamese. To access alternate translations, users would click a link with the name of the language, written in that language. The ten survey questions were:



### Survey Questions

1. How could we improve Tukwila to better support our businesses and workers?
2. How could we improve Tukwila to attract new businesses, workers, and/or job opportunities?
3. What types of businesses would you like to see more of in Tukwila?
4. What types of businesses would you like to see less of in Tukwila?
5. What are the strengths of Tukwila's business economy? What specific opportunities should the City pursue?
6. What are the weaknesses of Tukwila's business economy? What specific challenges might be holding the City's economy back?
7. What are your ideas for increasing Tukwila's tax revenue?
8. What kind of jobs would you like to see more of in Tukwila? What are the barriers keeping people from these jobs?
9. What are the greatest needs in terms of skills development, education, or job training for Tukwila's workers?
10. What are Tukwila workers' greatest challenges, issues, or needs? (For example, income, housing, childcare, or transportation.)

In addition to surveying residents’, workers’, and business owners’ thoughts around Tukwila’s economy, the survey offers users the option to provide information about themselves. The following respondent demographic summary describes the respondents:

## Respondent Demographics and Information

- The majority of survey respondents were aged between 25 and 60 years old, with only 10% of respondents being younger than 25 and 11% being older than 60.
- Of the 80 respondents, 79 used English and 1 respondent used Spanish.
- More than half of respondents live in Tukwila and more than a third of respondents work in Tukwila.
- Respondents come from neighborhoods all over, with the most represented neighborhoods being Foster and Tukwila Hill at 19% representation and 13% respectively. McMicken, Riverton, Tukwila Urban Center, and Cascade View made up a combined 29% of respondents, while 36% of respondents came from neighborhoods that were not listed.
- When asked about their favorite businesses, the business that received the most mentions was the Somali Health Board (SHB) (25%).<sup>1</sup> Other notable mentions include Spice Bridge (10%) and Southcenter Mall (5%).

Final analysis of the survey explored all 80 responses gathered and summarized takeaways below. Full graphs describing the responses are included in the appendix of this document. Takeaways from analysis of the survey closely track comments received in subsequent focus group sessions. The takeaways reflect the responses and are not necessarily our recommendations.

## Summary of Survey Responses

- To support existing businesses and workers, Tukwila must reduce crime, improve transit access, improve public image of the city, reduce taxes & regulations, and produce more affordable housing.
- To attract new businesses, workers, and job opportunities, Tukwila must clean and beautify, reduce crime, have more events & destinations, pay better wages, and produce more affordable housing.
- More sought-after businesses in Tukwila include small / cultural / ethnic businesses, grocery stores, other retail and services, restaurants and cafes, and community and arts spaces and theatres.
- Less sought-after businesses in Tukwila include fast food and convenience stores, chain stores, large format / strip retail, manufacturing and distribution, and casinos and gambling establishments.
- Strengths and opportunities for Tukwila's business economy include its multiculturalism and diversity, Southcenter Mall and experiential retail offerings, its location and Sea-Tac Airport, and the Sounder and mass transit options.
- Weaknesses and challenges for Tukwila's business economy include crime, homelessness and drug use; low wages / high cost of living; auto-reliance; lack of support for immigrants and minorities; burdensome taxes, and permitting and regulation.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The City contracted with the Somali Health Board to promote the survey.

- To make Tukwila's tax revenues more sustainable, the City should, cut taxes / reduce spending; tax larger businesses more; attract more new businesses; increase housing supply; and grow small businesses.
- More sought-after jobs in Tukwila include higher-paying / higher-skill employment, tech jobs, small business / startups, healthcare jobs, cultural / arts sector jobs, and food business jobs.
- The greatest workforce development needs for Tukwila are better access to educational opportunities, adult learning opportunities, language training, technology / STEM training, business skill training, and trades and apprenticeships.
- Tukwila's greatest economic challenges, issues, or needs include providing more affordable housing, high wage jobs, better transit / transportation options, better public safety, more parking, and more homeless shelters / social services.

## Popup Installation

City staff facilitated and staffed a number of in-person engagement events that were utilized to introduce the project and either collect surveys or direct stakeholders to the online survey via graphics and a QR code. While a detailed schedule can be found in the Appendix, these events included Tukwila Farmer's Markets, commission and board meetings, as well as community events like National Night Out and See You In the Park. The posters and graphics shown right and below were among those created for these events.



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**Take the survey now!**

The City of Tukwila would like your input as we create a strategy to strengthen our economic future. As part of this process, we invite you to complete a brief survey.

The survey is available in multiple languages and takes less than 10 minutes to complete. If you prefer, talk to us in person! For more information, email us at: [Business@TukwilaWA.gov](mailto:Business@TukwilaWA.gov) or visit: [TukwilaWA.gov/Economy](http://TukwilaWA.gov/Economy)

Survey available in English, Somali, Vietnamese, Swahili, Simplified Chinese, Amharic, Burmese, French, Nepali. Survey closes December 18, 2022.

Tukwila Economic Development | cai community alternatives

## Project Website & Interactive Map

A project website (and project graphic, at right) was created by Community Attributes with the assistance of the City of Tukwila to



introduce the project, link to in-progress work, status updates, and engagement tools – including an interactive webmap allowing users to place geographic comments and the online survey. The project website was integrated into the the City of Tukwila Economic Development Division’s page and is hosted and maintained by the City. The website is located here: <https://www.tukwilawa.gov/departments/economic-development/economic-development-strategy/>

Accessible via the project website, an interactive map was also created by CAI to solicit insights and ideas related to economic development in Tukwila by specific location. It was posted online for public viewing and comment starting in October of 2022. An analysis of responses received by August of 2023 reviews 16 responses.

The website and map provided links to translation to multiple languages, including Spanish, French, Amharic, Burmese, Nepali, Chinese, Somali, Swahili, and Vietnamese. Users would click a link with the name of the language, written in that language, to access a version of the website and map translated in its entirety.

### Key Takeaways

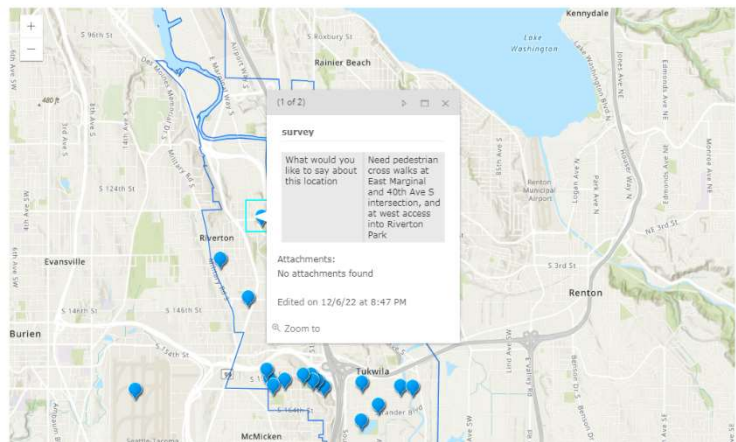
- Participants identified some of Tukwila’s key assets on the interactive map, including the Seattle- Tacoma international airport, Westfield Southcenter, and the Green River. Some included opportunities to further improve these assets, such as “Would love to see a large lounge-style cafe in the Southcenter area! Our only coffee shops outside the mall is Starbucks” and “Utilize the river as an amenity for businesses and residents throughout Southcenter... Enhance trail connections, water

#### SHARE YOUR IDEAS

We want to hear from you! Whether you’re a resident, recent arrival, own a business, or work in Tukwila, your ideas will be critical to the success of this strategy. Do you have ideas for a business or service or insights about a particular corner of the City? [Add your input](#) to the interactive map below. Have a few minutes to give detailed feedback about doing business in the City, or want to discuss a particular challenge? Take or share our [Online Survey](#).

Use the links below to view the survey in other languages.

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access, open space, floodplain and habitat; include an 'art walk' and interpretive signage about habitat, culture and history.”

- The majority of comments on the interactive map pertain to transportation concerns associated with all manner of modes. One comment identified a bus stop near Rivercrest cemetery that is in need of a shelter. Another requests pedestrian cross walks at East Marginal and 40th Ave S intersection, and at the west access into Riverton Park.
- Several comments related to transportation improvements for S 160<sup>th</sup> St. These included adding curb paint for parking delineation, managing abandoned cars, and decreasing car speeds. Two intersections were identified as dangerous for pedestrians and drivers along this road, one at S 160<sup>th</sup> St and 51 Ave S, and another at S 160<sup>th</sup> St and 53<sup>rd</sup> Ave S.
- Another common topic of comments in the interactive map was Crystal Springs Park. One comment asks for lighting to be added to this park. Another suggests the city purchase the parcel directly to the southeast of the park for expansion. And another asks that improvements on the upper park connecting to the lower park be made ADA accessible.
- Two comments point out locations for community gardens, one in Crestview Park, and another in an abandoned home on the corner of S 158<sup>th</sup> St and 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave St.
- Finally, one comment advises that Alliance Residential plans to build new apartments on the corner of Baker Blvd and Andover Park E.

## Listening Sessions

City staff held listening sessions at the City’s boards, commissions, and committee meetings. A list of all twelve sessions with notes is included in the appendix. The key findings from the listening sessions closely match themes heard in the surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Key findings below represent feedback from the listening sessions and not necessarily our recommendations.

### Key Findings for Building on Tukwila’s Assets

- **Tukwila's welcoming, multi-cultural, and multi-generational community is an opportunity to build upon what people already love about Tukwila.** Participants in listening sessions described strengths and assets of Tukwila’s community as tight-knit, diverse, multi-cultural, welcoming, inter-generational, and family-friendly. Because of its comfortable community, some participants described feelings of safety in Tukwila. Some suggestions for ways to further lean into this identity included creating spaces for grandparents and grandkids, launching a cultural festival to celebrate Tukwila’s diversity, and finding ways to highlight the Ukrainian language.
- **Many participants wished to expand upon Tukwila’s family-friendly atmosphere by investing in family-oriented benefits and activities.** This included items such as increasing funding for local schools and teachers, locating restaurants, a teen center, and other

student- oriented activities within walking distance of Foster High School. Some type of youth or community center that includes meeting spaces, activity spaces, and programs for different age brackets was very popular, such as a Boys and Girls Club. Investing in recreation space, such as open access soccer fields or basketball courts was also a popular suggestion, with a particular angle towards providing recreation spaces for youth in apartments. The TIB area surfaced several times as an ideal location for investment of these types.

- **Young participants showed a particular interest in transit and wished to see investment for more interconnectedness in Tukwila.** Young participants listed Tukwila’s buses and light rail as some of Tukwila’s biggest assets, but they mentioned difficulty using transit through the VIA app, which they report does not show TCC or allow connections to light rail. Other participants wanted to see more connectivity between parks and trails in the city.
- **Other strengths of Tukwila listed by participants included;** Tukwila’s location near the airport, major highways, and Seattle; diverse and plentiful retail and entertainment offerings; tourism for travelers; large employers such as Amazon and Prologist; and Tukwila’s USCIS office.

### Key Findings on Services

- **Many participants wished to see more investment in social service agencies in Tukwila.** While participants recognized and appreciated the existing programs serving all different types of groups in Tukwila, such as the library program for incoming immigrants, many wanted to see even more programs. Suggested focuses for new programs included shelter for those experiencing homelessness, shelter for domestic abuse survivors, mental and behavioral health programs, incarceration transition assistance, a SeaTac and Tukwila joint-managed animal control services, translation services for immigrants and refugees, and math assistance programs for students with low English-speaking ability. Other suggestions included increasing wages for service providers such as case workers and increasing funding for community organizations.
- **The desire to attract more grocery stores was repeated seven times through the twelve sessions.** The type of stores suggested ranged from Safeway to Albertsons, Wholefoods, Amazon Fresh, and even neighborhood markets, such as Fred Meyer in Burien. Multiple sources qualify that the need is for full-service grocers, and one suggestion specifically placed a grocery store near Allenton or East Marginal Way at Boeing Access Road.
- **Many participants listed the need for Health Care in Tukwila.** Participants asked for more community clinics, especially those with cross-cultural competency, more urgent care especially on TIB, for mental health services in elementary schools, and for a teen health center in high

schools or at HealthPoint Future Wellness Center on TIB. Still others suggested building a new hospital in Tukwila, and to bring health care into the Southcenter district.

- **Bringing in more attractions and events to Tukwila was a priority to many participants.** Types of activities suggested included placing a skating rink, selfie museum, driving range, and a dinner theater, while types of events included a concert series, Bark in the Park, free events, and more events like the Ru Paul Drag Race show that was at Westfield Mall and Juneteenth. Still other suggestions for this type of strategy included surveying residents on where they like to go in their off hours to determine ways those services can be provided locally, investing in walkability in one area of town to designate it as the downtown space where people can park and walk to multiple activities, and converting a big box development into a large food hall.
- **Desire for investment in a central and accessible community-building gathering place was a common theme in the listening sessions.** Whether it would be a hall space to rent for cultural events, conference rooms for local businesses to rent, a teen center, a senior center, or even spaces for each neighborhood, participants want to see more community gathering spaces in Tukwila.
- **Every listening group described a desire for further diversifying the local restaurant scene in Tukwila.** Many participants touched on the way food diversity builds connections and wished to lean in to more fresh and culturally diverse food spots such as Congolese restaurants, food truck courts or rallies, and mom and pop restaurants. Participants asked for diversity in food offerings as well, wanting to see more healthy, fresh, vegetarian, and vegan options. Specific types requested included a pizza place, a live music pub, a brewery, local coffee shops, and a breakfast spot.
- **Participants wished to promote and improve parks in Tukwila.** Access to parks of all sizes from all kinds of neighborhoods is important to participants as it makes Tukwila more family friendly, spruces up the community, and allows community members to lead healthier lives. Participants also suggested prioritizing protecting natural areas such as along the river and creating natural points of interest in Tukwila, such as a park around Tukwila Pond.

### Key Findings for Addressing Concerns in Tukwila

- **Housing Affordability and Residential Anti-displacement strategies were top concerns for many participants.** Participants describe the need for more affordable and workforce housing in Tukwila. Displacement is a major concern for many participants as well. Strategies suggested to combat displacement trends included ensuring that revenue growth goals do not result in displacement, building affordable housing in Tukwila School District so that students do not have to move away, ensuring the economic development strategy takes into account equity for

underserved communities and avoids displacement, and increase public relations on livability for families in Tukwila. As Tukwila's housing becomes more expensive, it becomes less accessible for refugees and immigrants. Larger housing units, such as those with 3 or 4 bedrooms are particularly in demand, as is housing for artists, and trailer park units.

- **Similarly, participants advocated for more support for local businesses and commercial anti-displacement strategies.** Many participants outlined the importance of affordable, small commercial spaces for local businesses in the city to prevent commercial displacement, especially for BIPOC businesses and mom and pop retail. Some examples given of places participants want to see more of included Medina Mall at Tukwila Village and Mall of Africa in SeaTac. Small local businesses could also benefit from creative work spaces, assistance programs to help small businesses navigate permitting and processes, and funding mechanisms to help small businesses afford commercial rents. Refugees and immigrants in particular represent a population of potential business owners, but require some assistance or support.
- **Participants identify homelessness, drug use, building disrepair, and vacancies as some of Tukwila's weaknesses or threats moving forward.** Participants wish to see dilapidated, vacant, and unsafe buildings addressed, along with poorly maintained apartment complexes. Strategies to beautify and clean up the city were suggested, including a volunteer program to pick up litter, especially along Gillam Creek, and focusing city cleanup efforts around bus stops.
- **Similarly, several participants felt that improving Tukwila's reputation is an essential strategy.** Participants would like the world to be more aware of Tukwila's community, for more development and investment to be attracted to the city, and for more families to be attracted to the city for its livability.
- **Many participants listed strategies to engage in workforce development in Tukwila in order to connect residents with higher paying jobs or prepare refugees or immigrants to enter the labor force.** Opportunities for adult education, job training, apprenticeships or internships, and certifications programs are important to participants. Some ambitious suggestions included building a college in Tukwila, hosting a community or technical college extension, creating training centers or job centers, designing an ESL course, or collaborating with education institutions to run night classes, or business classes for entrepreneurs.

### Key Findings on Development in Tukwila

- **Many participants listed more development and business attraction as an essential strategy for Tukwila.** Redevelopment on TIB was praised, especially development that offers high paying jobs, offers needed services in the area, and improves the area's appearance.

Some mentioned that there is opportunity in Tukwila to draw in more high employers by building upon Tabor 100, and by providing campus environments businesses operating under a hybrid work model. Several participants asked the city streamline permitting processes to further attract developers. Types of development participants would like to see include mixed-use business, mixed-use hotels or condos, businesses near the greenbelt, businesses that will generate net tax revenues such as auto dealerships, casinos, or sports betting. Still others said that casinos, pawn shops, fast food, and liquor and tobacco are all undesirable types of development in Tukwila. One interesting comment suggested to help people learn how to become developers to develop the types of space they want to see.

- **While some saw development as desirable, others wanted to carefully consider the type of development allowed in Tukwila and continue to lean in to Tukwila’s small community feel moving forward.** Some participants voiced that growth for its own sake may not be in Tukwila’s best interests, and that the effect of development on the surrounding community should always be considered. The types of preferred development in this vein include prioritizing walkable neighborhoods, prioritizing affordable housing, and good paying jobs.

#### Key Findings on Upcoming Opportunities in Tukwila

- **When it comes to Tukwila’s engagement and equity, participants had positive feedback as well as some suggestions.** QR codes are identified as a very successful way to expand survey participation and translation of engagement surveys and other engagement programming has been essential. Engagement to different groups could be achieved more successfully through collaboration with different community-based organizations such as nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and student associations. Finally, participants suggested a section be dedicated to Equity in the City’s Economic Development Strategic Plan or the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Participants identified several current event issues that Tukwila should consider in its future plans.** The first is the need to find common ground between low income and high income groups in areas of safety, access, and affordability. The next is the trend of a new influx of electric vehicles in the city, especially for transportation logistics at ProLogis. Another consideration is how Tukwila may be affected by development of the former Boeing Longacres area in Renton with proposed housing office uses. And finally, participants with an eye for development pointed out Tukwila South as a “sleeping giant” that may be an area of investment and development in the future.

## Contracted Engagement

In order to engage in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive manner, the City issued a Request for Interest (RFI) to local community-based organizations and contracted with six of them to conduct engagement with specific communities. Those organizations are: African Community Housing and Development, Debonair barbershop, Growing Contigo, Riverton Park United Methodist Church, Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce, Somali Health Board, and Talitha Consults. Key findings below represent feedback from the listening sessions and not necessarily our recommendations.

### African Community Housing and Development (ACHD)

ACHD is a community founded and –led organization that builds prosperity for the African Diaspora immigrant and refugee community in King County. ACHD surveyed their businesses and residents in 2022 to create a Report on Small Business Support and Workforce Development Programs. Key findings from this report are outlined below.

- **Deep-seated mistrust in communities of color towards government programs demands trust building as an essential first step to engagement.** Building trust through partnerships with community organizations, offering resources and programs in multiple languages, hiring culturally competent staff, and providing interpretation and translation services are all important ways to begin engagement with these groups. Mistrust of bureaucratic entities and programs often prevents clients from applying for government benefits and grants. Funds allocated to trusted messengers and organizations that are embedded in and represent the communities served can help overcome this barrier.
- **A significant number of immigrants in Seattle are entrepreneurs, and there is a desire to support and foster entrepreneurship within these communities.** The African Diaspora immigrant and refugee community in particular value entrepreneurship.
- **Addressing underemployment and creating opportunities for stable employment are key concerns.** Many community members face underemployment with low-wage jobs that do not adequately support their families. Some turn to the gig economy for income but encounter similar challenges.
- **Chefs and owners of small catering and market-based prepared food businesses in Tukwila seek support to navigate the bureaucratic processes involved in food business permitting.** They also express a need for grant writing assistance, web development, digital marketing, and branding support.
- **Community members often seek flexible funds that can be used for various business activities.** The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand for funds to cover fixed expenses such as rent and utilities. Cultural

considerations, such as the Muslim faith's prohibition on interest, pose unique challenges in accessing financial support.

- **Recent immigrants with limited English language skills face challenges when navigating the business licensing, permitting, and financial landscape.** Websites and official documents that are primarily available in English present barriers. Clients need outreach, education, and support to overcome these challenges.
- **Financial literacy is a recurring need among business owners, particularly in industries with clients who may not have traditional financial records or credit scores.** Courses and instruction offered in clients' native languages are essential to bridge this gap.
- **There is a need for increased access to housing programs, including rental assistance and lower-cost or subsidized permanent housing.** Additionally, clients seek opportunities for paid training, certifications, English language learning classes, and assistance with transportation to support workforce development.

### Debonair Barber

Debonair is a barbershop located on Southcenter Parkway in Tukwila. The City contracted with Debonair to promote the online survey to their customers and also to engage other barbershops to promote the online survey.

### Growing Contigo

Growing Contigo staff conducted direct in-person outreach to four businesses identified as Spanish speaking operating in the City of Tukwila. Each identified business received an introductory visit dropping off a paper survey, flier with invitation to fill out the survey directly online, and a secondary visit to either help them complete the survey or answer any questions they may have. Neighboring businesses also received a visit from our team with a flier dropoff inviting them to participate in the online survey. In total, 15 businesses were visited, but only 1 filled out a paper survey with Growing Contigo's help. Growing Contigo also engaged in an online social media campaign. Key findings from their engagement are listed below.

- Businesses were hesitant at first to engage. **Repeat visits are the most impactful way of establishing trust and having a successful engagement with small businesses.**
- The online **social media campaign was successful** in reaching intended audience. High post engagement and re-shares demonstrates an interest in more information being provided in this way.
- The paper survey filled out at El Pollo Real echoes many concerns identified in the online survey and focus group sessions. Some unique answers include the request for more children's hospitals in Tukwila, and identifying low customer traffic as a major problem that is related to public safety concerns in Tukwila.

### Riverton Park United Methodist Church

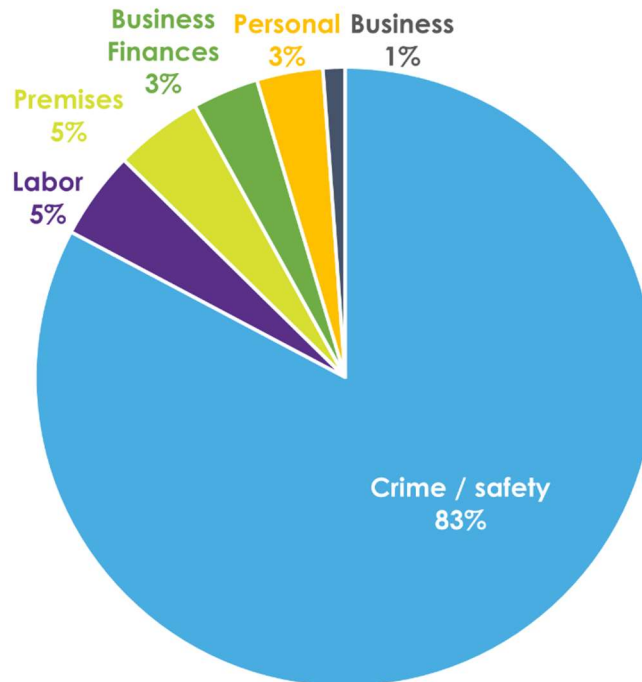
Riverton Park United Methodist Church operates a food bank on site, provides space for unhoused people to camp, and now host a tiny homes village on site. They were contracted to engage unhoused persons to complete the online survey. Through their engagement, 13 unhoused people completed the survey via the online portal.

### Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce

The local chamber of commerce made door-to-door visits, “ambassador walks”, to businesses on three occasions in September, October, and December. The first two ambassador walks were visiting 50 businesses in the Southcenter District, and the December ambassador walk visited 14 businesses along Tukwila International Boulevard. The project website and online survey were promoted, as they became available, and responses to the question “What keeps you up at night?” were collected.

When asked “What keeps you up at night?” 83% of responses from businesses engaged through the Tukwila Chamber of Commerce on ambassador walks were related to crime and safety concerns in Tukwila. Some notable quotes include “I report theft to the police daily” and “Business is great, but customers are dissatisfied departing to see their vehicle has been damaged or stolen”.

**Exhibit 1. Business Responses Grouped by Larger Category, Tukwila, 2023**



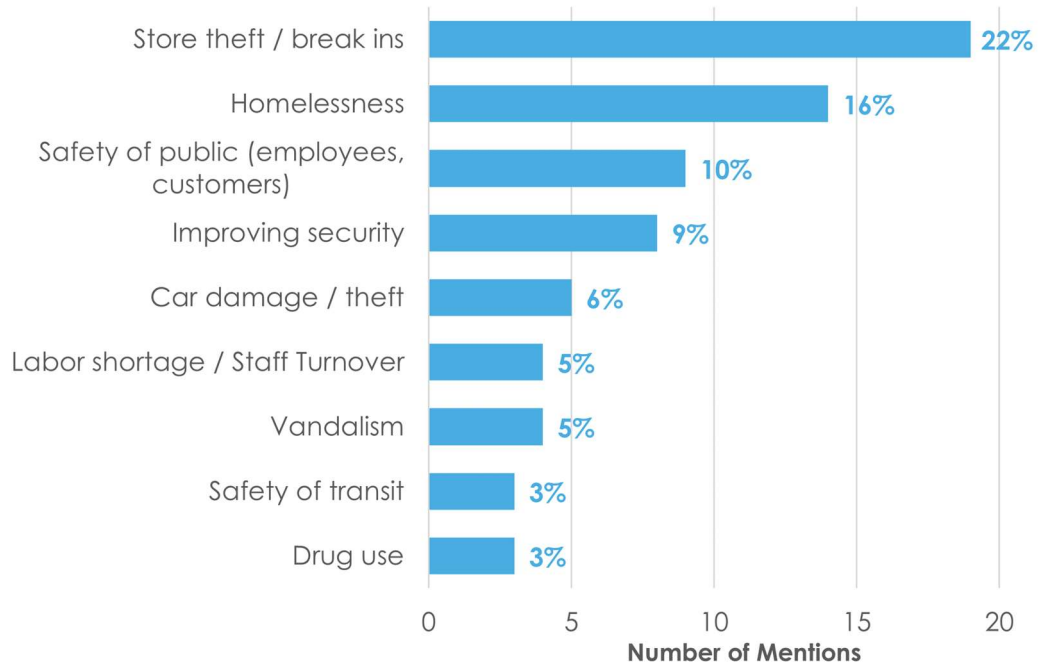
Sources: Tukwila Chamber of Commerce 2022; CAI 2023.

Breaking up these categories into individual common responses, store theft and break ins make up 22% of all responses. This is closely followed by homelessness,



public safety concerns, and the need for improved security. Of the top 9 responses by businesses, only 1 is not related to crime and safety concerns – Labor shortage and employee turnover, which was mentioned 6% of the time.

**Exhibit 2. Common Responses by Businesses Engaged in Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Walks, Tukwila, 2023**



Source: Tukwila Chamber of Commerce 2022; CAI 2023.

Less common responses included:

- Landscaping issues
- Increasing customer traffic
- Lack of property owner and property manager accountability
- Safety at night
- Rent increases
- Mental health resources
- Arsen
- Shopping carts (stolen)
- Garbage / trash around the city
- Parking lot space / parking violations
- The B/O tax
- Language barrier

**Somali Health Board**

The Somali Health Board was contracted to encourage people to fill out the online survey. They promoted the online survey through social media, flyers, and

an email blast. They also held three in-person visits to prominent locations and helped people submit surveys.

### Talitha Consults

Using questions from the Online Survey, Talitha Consults conducted surveys with 50 residents from two apartment complexes, Ridge Cliff & Ridge Spring apartments. They also held a listening session with 10 students from a Foster High School special education class. In total, the survey was conducted in 7 languages and received responses from 60 participants. While many of the key findings mirror those received in the Online Survey, some new feedback emerged from this more diverse audience and has been summarized below.

- **Targeted outreach was effective in engaging with a diverse group and uncovering new feedback on the survey questions.** In the future, similar research on the geographic and demographic target should be conducted to inform engagement efforts. For example, the Talitha team reached out to trusted community messengers, including property managers and educators, and identified the need to translate the survey into Dari. In the end, over 20% of the survey participants spoke Dali.
- When asked about Tukwila's strengths, participants listed **bus-stops, discounted heating, and internet** for income eligible residents & businesses.
- When asked about what business they'd like to see more of, participants listed **libraries, English language centers, and affordable organic products and vegetarian food.**
- Participants suggested several unique items to better support Tukwila businesses and residents, including **more indoor sports in Tukwila, such as gyms and wellness facilities, better transit options, more street lights and patrol, and more health care facilities.** Most survey takers go to Burien, Tacoma and Seattle for medical appointments. For transit dependent residents, the community center is difficult to access.
- When asked about what specific opportunities the City of Tukwila should pursue, participants listed **increasing the number of school buses, supporting grocery stores that serve Asian food, investing in cultural centers and open spaces near apartments, increasing street lights, programs to help Latino communities navigate social and economic systems, affordable child care, and more targeted support for culturally specific groups.** For example, job fairs for targeted communities.
- **Participants identified discrimination at work (by race, age and ethnicity), language barriers, inaccessible government jobs, and personal barriers, such as qualifications and education, as the major barriers to attaining desired jobs.** They also indicate difficulty in understanding Laws and knowing where to report existing discrimination at work.

- When asked about what types of jobs they'd like to see in Tukwila, participants described the need **for low level-of-entry jobs**, such as manufacturing, factory, warehouse, construction jobs, and trades. Another common response was jobs for artisans, such as tailoring, carpet weaving, dress making and beauty salons and including “tailoring (dressmaking) and hand crafts, especially for the Afghan women”. Finally, participants also desired diverse jobs for family businesses and more jobs for teens.

## Interviews

Key stakeholders were identified by the City and individual interviews were conducted during month of July. Interview questions surrounded the topic of economic development strategies, strengths, and weaknesses in the City of Tukwila. Findings from the interviews closely match findings collected via other forms of engagement, especially focus groups and the online survey. The key findings below have been aggregated across interviewees and summarized by topic.

### Key Findings

- **Interviewees describe challenges related to Tukwila’s permitting processes and outline the importance of regulatory efficiency.** The efficiency of regulatory processes, including permitting and approvals, was noted as a factor that can affect businesses and economic development. Interviewees specifically mentioned issues with inspectors and the timing of tenant and landlord responsibilities. Delays and miscommunication in permitting can result in wasted resources, impacting economic development efforts.
- **The minimum wage and the difficulty in finding skilled labor were noted as factors affecting businesses in Tukwila while workforce development opportunities were highlighted.** Lack of available and qualified local labor pool is a challenge in many sectors, highlighting the importance of education and the workforce pipeline for economic development. The potential for the school system to serve as a conduit for the community and businesses was highlighted and collaboration between schools and businesses, particularly programs like CorePlus Aerospace, was discussed as a potential way to support economic development efforts.
- **Interviewees were very positive on the City’s engagement and economic development efforts.** Many expressed appreciation for community engagement and cohesive development planning in Tukwila, while also describing the importance of having a clear mission and strategy for economic development.
- **Interviewees would like economic development in Tukwila to improve the perception of Tukwila as a business-friendly environment, compared to other neighboring cities, and focus on attracting and retaining businesses through a supportive environment.** Tukwila’s advantages such as location, infrastructure, and daytime population were

highlighted. The competitive landscape for financial resources, such as taxes and bonds, was mentioned as a concern. There is a limited availability of funds in Tukwila and for-profit developers face challenges in accessing them.

- **Public safety concerns and their impact on businesses, including issues like theft and violence, were a major concern to interviewees.** The need to improve the perception of the area as a residential community was also mentioned.
- **The need for housing development and redevelopment in Tukwila was emphasized, as interviewees discussed incentives for affordable housing, land availability for different types of businesses, and the impact of land use policies on economic development.** Participants noted the potential for improvement in underutilized properties and the importance of creating a more attractive residential community. Encouraging affordable housing through incentives, ensuring a diverse range of land types are available for various types of businesses, and instituting flexible and adaptive land uses are each mentioned as important strategies to consider.

## Focus Groups

Five (5) focus group discussions were conducted, with each focused on a different aspect of Tukwila's economy. Stakeholders for focus group discussions were identified in partnership with city staff. The following contains key findings from these meetings. The key findings reflect responses received, not necessarily our recommendations.

### Economic Diversification Focus Group

- **Tukwila's status as a retail destination, driven by mall anchors and big box stores, attracts significant traffic and positions it as a retail hub for south King County.** Retail and hospitality industries have capitalized on this advantage, benefiting from the influx of customers who visit Tukwila for shopping and comparison shopping. The City's advantageous location and infrastructure, including its proximity to I-5, and the airport, further supports its appeal to businesses. Tukwila's inventory of industrial space is another appealing factor, attracting businesses in the warehousing and wholesaling sectors.
- **While Tukwila boasts a notable concentration of Asian-based businesses, there is a need for more marketing and outreach to support this segment.** These businesses, located particularly around Westfield Mall and Southcenter Blvd., contribute to the City's identity. Expanding the presence and awareness of Asian-based businesses, as well as catering to different Asian markets, could further enhance Tukwila's economic diversity and appeal.
- **Locating smaller businesses in certain neighborhoods, such as the retail district near the mall and beyond in the valley, poses challenges due to higher commercial rent and larger spaces.**

Tukwila's small residential community coexists with a massive business district, creating disparities in the availability of spaces for small and independent family businesses compared to other shopping and dining facilities.

- **Small businesses can benefit from the flexibility and responsiveness of Tukwila as a smaller municipality.** Strategic decision-making regarding business requirements and regulations is crucial to avoid overwhelming small businesses and to promote a more supportive environment. This might include more education and outreach programs for small businesses to navigate changing regulations and compliance with local ordinances, or considering partial exemptions for small businesses from certain regulations, such as minimum wage or the new business and occupation (B&O) tax requirements.<sup>2</sup>
- **Establishing a clear identity and destination beyond Southcenter Mall is essential for economic development.** Through initiatives like utilizing tax increment financing (TIF), Tukwila could connect the river, businesses, and parks to create a more cohesive community as well as business environment. Attracting tech companies and higher-end multifamily projects requires addressing concerns related to identity, market appeal, and zoning options. Tukwila should also explore new sectors and markets to attract such as food processing or general service industries, which would benefit from Tukwila's central location and proximity to Kent Valley.
- **Infrastructure investment is crucial for the growth of industries in Tukwila, particularly in manufacturing, industrial, and research and development (R&D) sectors.** The City's industrial center faces challenges due to a lack of community investment and support, hindering the recruitment and provisioning of future businesses. Multi-jurisdictional utility provision poses challenges but also presents opportunities for cost sharing, facility districting, and accessing grants/loans. Enhancing connectivity and regional transit requires demonstrating density and demand, while also exploring collaboration and cost-sharing opportunities with rural and regional efforts.

#### Identity, Marketing, Promotion and Image Focus Group

- **Tukwila offers many assets upon which to build a unique identity, however, it faces some challenges in lack of regional awareness and in reputation of crime.** Tukwila offers a thriving one-stop-shopping retail scene with free parking, which is not commonly found in other

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<sup>2</sup> Note: the minimum wage was enacted by voter initiative and the City does not have the authority to change it.

shopping districts. It also has public artwork and art programs, such as the utility box art program, which enhance its visual appeal, and outdoor recreational amenities such as beautiful parks, the Lake to Sound trail, and the Green River. Participants also brought up the abundance of recreational activities for families and children in Tukwila, such as trampoline parks, arcades, bowling, and movie theaters. However, outside the Southcenter area, many attractions and offerings in Tukwila are not well highlighted, leading to limited awareness of the City's diverse range of experiences. Further, Tukwila is often perceived as a distant and potentially unsafe place, mainly due to publicized incidents like shootings in the mall. Its potential as a regional transportation hub and its cultural diversity are often overlooked in discussions about the city.

- **Tukwila can enhance its marketing and promotion by engaging in events, sponsorships, and splashy ad campaigns to generate positive attention.** Maintaining cleanliness (reducing litter), engaging in beautification, and focusing on environmental sustainability are important ways to boost Tukwila's image. The City should also capitalize on its proximity to the airport by providing activities or services for layover travelers. Finally, the City should find a way to host attractions, whether it be events (such as the local refugee and immigrant farmer's market), sponsorships (such as an annual 5k), a destination (like Starfire), or a collection of unique businesses in order to make Tukwila a destination rather than just a pass-through location.
- **While Tukwila is known for specific attractions or facilities, such as shopping, logistics, or the Museum of Flight, a challenge lies in establishing Tukwila as a cohesive and vibrant community.** Increased densification, infrastructure investment, and transportation connectivity are important investments for Tukwila to build up a cohesive local community that will attract young professionals and future business. Densifying the Southcenter market area, through transit-oriented development or incentives like the Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program and parking exemptions, as well as improving connectivity and regional transit services through collaboration with rural and regional efforts. Improving walkability and transportation within the City would also create a more inviting environment for visitors and community members alike.
- **Tukwila should engage in proactive planning when it comes to sites to prepare for upcoming opportunities.** Conducting a comprehensive analysis of available development sites in advance and ensuring their readiness can facilitate swift action and allow the City to capitalize on favorable prospects as they arise.

- **Tukwila's industrial center requires infrastructure investment and community support to maximize its potential and recruit future businesses.**

#### Retail, Dining and Entertainment Focus Group

- **The need for diversification and increased residential presence in Tukwila to support retail.** Tukwila's economic development should focus on diversifying industries beyond retail and industrial to create more employment opportunities and more housing. Participants cited the need for “rooftops” or captured market to support existing retail and retail growth. Southcenter was identified as a high potential candidate for a new urban center in the region. Through encouraging mixed-use development and increasing housing options in areas like Southcenter, as well as promoting walkability and community spaces within Tukwila's retail core, the City can enhance the overall experience and create a stronger sense of community. Hosting cultural events, festivals, and highlighting local attractions like the recent circus event can attract both residents and visitors, fostering a stronger sense of place in Tukwila.
- **Tukwila's retail, dining, and entertainment offerings are major draws to the City and strong economic assets; however, public safety concerns affect perceptions and investment in the city.** Large shopping centers like Westfield Mall, diverse dining options, and entertainment venues such as Starfire Sports Complex all come together to create a compelling shopping district that attracts visitors from Tukwila and beyond. Addressing public safety issues in Tukwila, particularly in areas like Southcenter, is crucial for fostering a positive environment and attracting investment. Improving safety and security measures will positively impact businesses, customers, and the overall reputation of Tukwila as a desirable destination.
- **Highlighting Tukwila's diversity and cultural experiences and leveraging Tukwila's location advantages.** Tukwila's diverse population presents an opportunity to showcase a wide range of ethnic and cultural dining options. Promoting and supporting small businesses, such as the various Asian and Mexican restaurants in the Southcenter area, can attract customers and enhance Tukwila's identity as a culturally rich community. Another asset is Tukwila's strategic location near the airport, major roads, and regional employers like Boeing. Emphasizing the convenience of easy access, ample parking availability, and the comprehensive shopping and entertainment experience at locations like the Westfield Southcenter can appeal to a broad customer base.
- **Tukwila's messaging to the local business community should create a positive business environment and showcase appreciation**

**for local businesses.** Smaller businesses can be stifled by burdens related to permitting, policy, and regulations. The City of Tukwila should improve communication and show support for the retail, dining, and hospitality industries and address challenges related to permitting, inspections, and other bureaucratic processes to streamline efforts of small or local businesses.

- **Signage restrictions can pose a hindrance to advertising efforts for entertainment venues in Tukwila.** Relaxing signage restrictions within these areas could significantly benefit businesses by providing them with enhanced advertising opportunities.

#### Vibrant, Thriving Community and Quality of Life Focus Group<sup>3</sup>

- **The Public Works Department maintains low service rates while facing increasing workloads, challenges in staffing, and increasing construction costs.** While working to manage and maintain underground utilities, sidewalks, roads, bridges, and traffic signals, Tukwila’s aging infrastructure continues to require ever more expensive upkeep and replacement. Public Works’ goals for the future include supporting multi-modal transportation, walkability, and livability as well as creating a more sustainable financial structure for the department, but lack of funding for ongoing utility service and infrastructure maintenance is a concern. Collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions, state agencies, and the Port is an avenue to explore sharing resources and some of the City’s maintenance load.
- **The Community Development Department is preparing for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update while taking on regulatory changes.** Focused on urban development patterns, including mixed-use growth and affordable housing strategies, the Community Development Department is juggling many moving pieces. Tukwila’s subarea plans, the upcoming changes to the Tukwila South development agreement, and other zoning concerns in the City lie at the forefront; however, issues of climate change, equity analysis, and housing quality are also considerations.
- **The Police Department’s number one priority over the next year is to increase staffing, as low staffing creates challenges in addressing crime and allowing Tukwila’s residential and retail communities to feel safe.** Crime issues in Tukwila include speeding vehicles, burglaries, violent crime, and drug-related activities. Limited

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<sup>3</sup> Note: this focus group consisted of the directors of city departments



resources and staffing shortages affect response times and community safety – as well as perceptions of safety.

- **The Parks and Recreation Department faces a lack of resources, but has goals in the upcoming year to increase access to parks and trails in Tukwila, enhance connectivity between neighborhoods, and encourage events in Tukwila.** There are three areas in the City that don't have access to a park within a ten- minute walk. Strategies to increase park access focus on these areas. Other projects to improve public wellness and livability include city beautification efforts and upcoming contributions to the City's strategic planning efforts. Future opportunities also exist along special event permitting and encouraging events through a centralized coordinated approach to bringing in economic development.
- **The Administrative Services Department is working on operationalizing equity policies and addressing language access and disparities.** They are researching an equity index, racial equity toolkit, and equitable outreach toolkit to promote equitable access and engage diverse communities. The connection between equity initiatives and economic development is emphasized.
- **The City of Tukwila faces financial challenges, including a structural deficit, and is working on a financial sustainability plan.** Issues such as using one-time grant money for ongoing efforts, sales tax equalization, and increasing costs impact the City's ability to maintain services and infrastructure. Exploring partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, private entities, and regional organizations is suggested to address common challenges, share resources, and promote regional development. Collaborative efforts in areas such as parks, emergency services, and law enforcement are discussed.
- **Tukwila has many opportunities for development, including the potential for an urban center in the Southcenter district.** Expanding recreational spaces, utilizing the riverfront, improving access to the airport, and creating destination amenities are discussed. Collaboration, regionalization of services, and leveraging ethnic diversity for economic development were mentioned as potential strategies.
- **The City faces challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff due to competitive salaries and high living costs in the region.** The impact of staffing shortages on public safety and service delivery is highlighted. The City aims to improve the workplace environment and employee relationships to attract and retain talent.

- **Tukwila’s school district has seen significant turnover in leadership and lacks important relationships with the business community for effective workforce development.**
- **Building trust with the community and ensuring effective use of funding are crucial for successful initiatives.** Public perception and trust play a role in securing support and resources. Effective messaging and transparency are needed to address public concerns and inspire community involvement, especially in concerns revolving around public safety.
- **Tukwila has many assets through which economic development can unfold and develop.** Options mentioned by participants included leaning in to Tukwila’s multicultural diversity, investing in the creation of destination spots, or capitalizing on proximity to the airport. Further development of sports fields, expansion of hotel options, and building upon multicultural businesses are also considered as opportunities for growth. While these options exist, the city’s departments each have urgent needs and goals that capture their attention and time.

#### Workforce Development and Access to Opportunity Focus Group

- **While Tukwila is served by many organizations participating in workforce development, the network between them can be strengthened.** Connections between different workforce development groups, such as educational institutions, community-based organizations (CBOs), Faith-based organizations (FBOs) and local businesses, can facilitate information sharing and collaboration in workforce development efforts.
- **The workforce development network in Tukwila would greatly benefit from a clearinghouse listing organizations and opportunities surrounding workforce development in the city and region.** Lack of awareness about available resources and programs in workforce development is a common challenge. A centralized platform, directory, or information hub that consolidates relevant information and organizations would further connect the workforce development network as well as assist students and adults seeking workforce development assistance. This information should be shared in a culturally and linguistically sensitive way, ensuring resources and support are available to Tukwila’s diverse community, including refugees.
- **Foster High School has successfully implemented various CTE programs, such as construction, manufacturing, environmental science, culinary arts, biotech, and business management administration.** These programs, accompanied by after-school leadership clubs, have been highly popular and have contributed to increased

enrollment and budget allocation. While this program prepares Foster High School's students for Tukwila's in-demand industries such as aviation, aerospace, maritime, and healthcare, it is difficult to follow what industries students enter when they graduate.

- **Students express interest in exposure to more hands-on opportunities such as competitive career clubs and internships.** Foster High School students have opportunities to take college credit classes (with the most common classes being computer science and biology), as well as receive credit for working a job outside of school. However, they express difficulty in finding internships that offer practical experience in desired fields. Foster High School's leadership clubs were highly praised by students and were identified as an area for further investment, especially those that contained a competitive element.
- **Lack of connections between leadership in education and in the business community places the burden of networking and finding opportunities on individual students or teachers.** Due to the long-term networking diligence of one of Foster High School's science teachers, more students each year are connected to internships. But the burden of finding and paving pathways for these opportunities is substantial.
- **Addressing the gap in environmental career opportunities requires attention in Tukwila.** Despite the popularity of environmental science programs at Foster High School, there appears to be a lack of opportunities pertaining to the environment within the city as well as a lack of investment city-wide in sustainability.
- **Enhancing the engagement of City staff and fostering collaboration with schools is vital for the success of workforce development initiatives.** Presently, there is limited involvement of City staff in school programs, internships, and career development efforts. Strengthening partnerships between City staff, educators, and students will amplify the effectiveness of these initiatives, and lead to better outcomes.

#### Small Business and Entrepreneurship Focus Group

- **Many small businesses in Tukwila struggle to regain pre-COVID revenues due to increasing labor costs and decreasing access to capital.** Small businesses face challenges accommodating higher wage rates, lease rates, and the cost of goods without pushing their prices too high. In addition, as the banking sector tightens due to economic conditions, businesses must meet stricter guidelines for loan approvals, which can be especially burdensome for small businesses.

- **Participants expressed the need for a centralized source of technical help that can provide guidance at the federal, state, and local levels.** Grant applications, taxation requirements, and tax credits in Tukwila are complex and the latest guidance from the Treasury and infrastructure bills is not written in an accessible manner. This highlights the need for publicly available and user-friendly technical assistance through a website, one-on-one services, or some other channel, to facilitate access to relevant information. Tukwila can also upscale existing technical assistance providers to better support businesses through sharing available resources, such as those offered by Evergreen Business Alliance and WEDA, with community organizations who have established relationships and trust within the communities they serve.
- **Tukwila’s immigrant-owned businesses in particular face challenges in navigating the banking system and obtaining capital due to their business structures.** Many immigrant-owned small businesses never receive a grant or loan in Tukwila. They require additional technical support to understand tax payment and managing operating costs, to find loan products that align with their faith-based requirements, and to find and apply for grants.
- **Many small business owners and entrepreneurs in Tukwila could benefit from business resources and support, including education in topics such as financing, operations, planning, and goal setting.** While a great starting point, online resources alone can be restrictive and inflexible. Participants expressed desire for a physical place or a clear contact to which business owners can take questions and challenges and receive assistance.
- **Participants expressed willingness to collaborate to fill coordination gap identified between businesses, government agencies, and the various organizations working to help small businesses.** Small businesses face challenges in identifying the right channels for addressing their concerns, exacerbated by a lack of communication and coordination among various levels of government. They express the desire for more proactive outreach from government agencies. Similarly, a coordination gap exists among the organizations dedicated to supporting small businesses. Participants suggested various solutions to improve the strength and coordination of this network, including the establishment of a centralized clearinghouse, a mailing list, or a dedicated website to consolidate and disseminate valuable information such as upcoming events and workshops.
- **Tukwila should prioritize investing in physical public spaces and enhancing access to community spaces as a means to bolster support for local businesses.**

- **There is untapped potential in Tukwila in exploring partnerships and opportunities for workforce development programs that can mutually benefit businesses and young students searching for internships.**

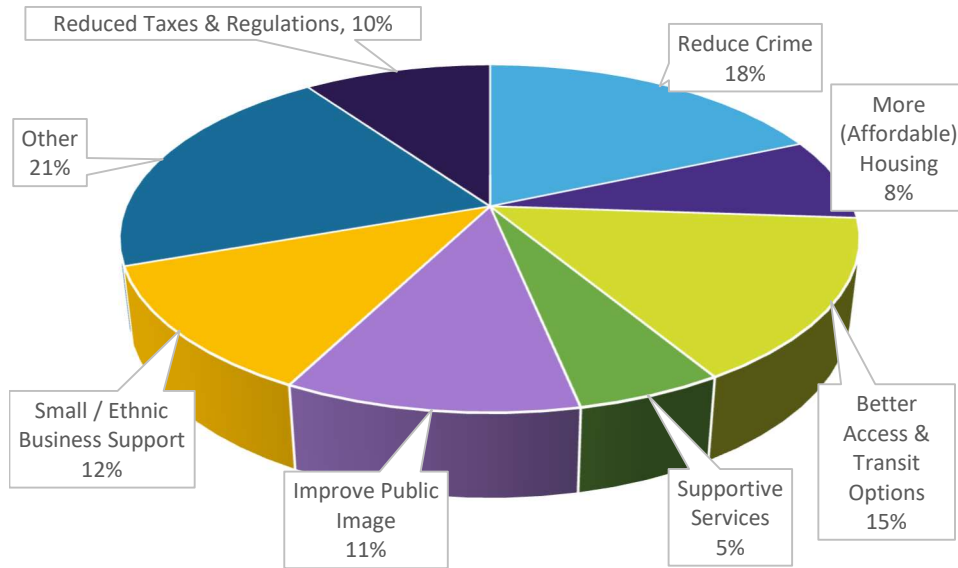
# APPENDIX

## Detailed Online Survey Analysis

The following includes the questions included in Tukwila’s online survey as well as graphs depicting analysis of results.

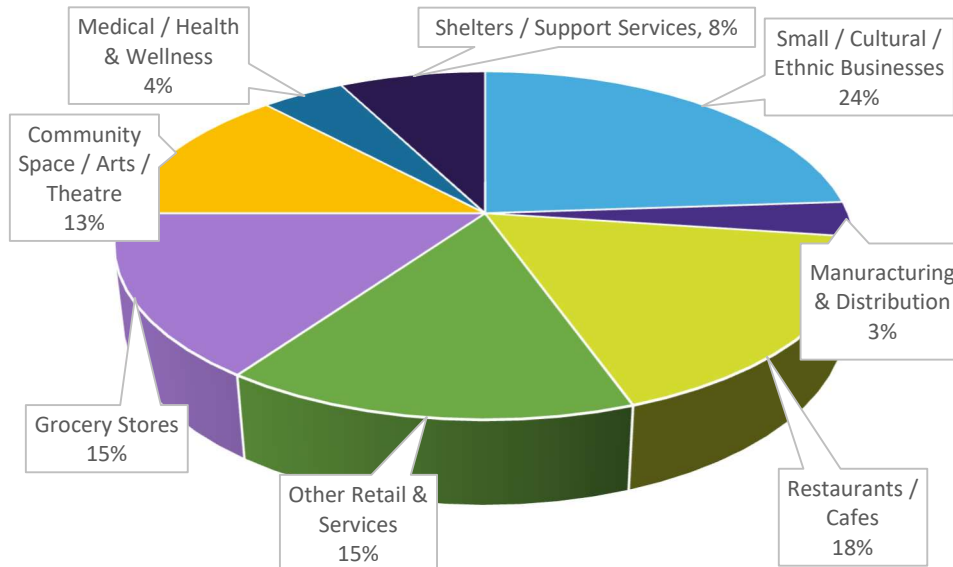
### Survey Questions

1. How could we improve Tukwila to better support our businesses and workers?



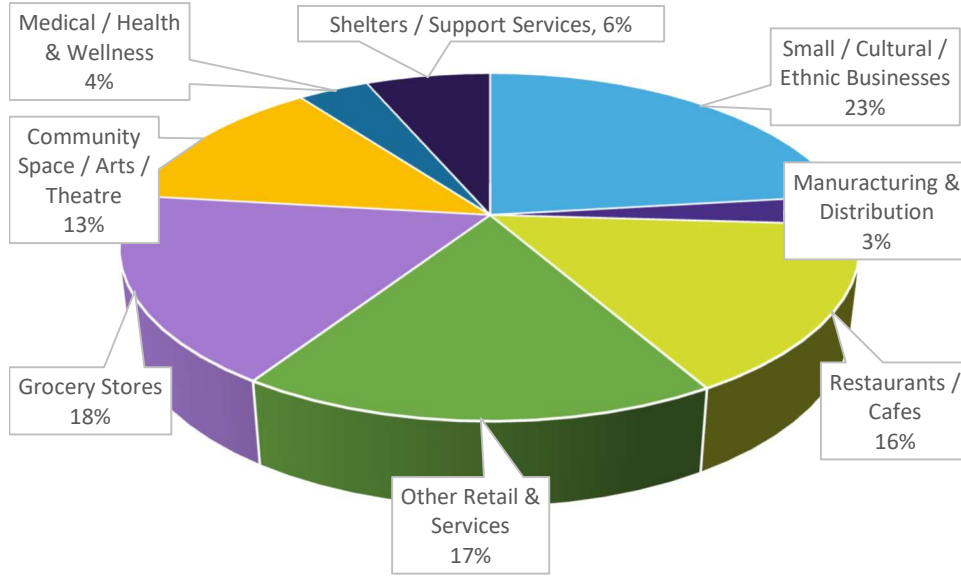
Source: CAI 2023.

2. How could we improve Tukwila to attract new businesses, workers, and/or job opportunities?



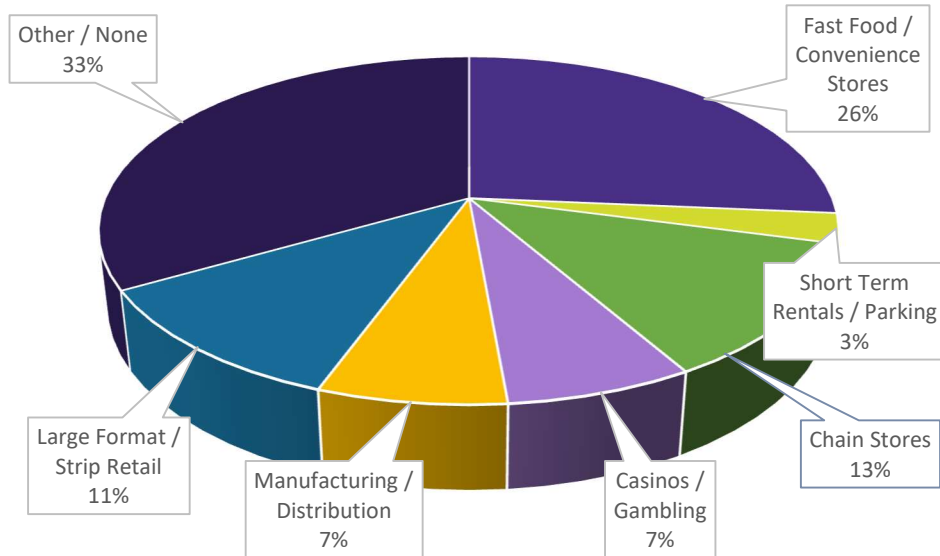
Source: CAI 2023.

3. What types of businesses would you like to see more of in Tukwila?



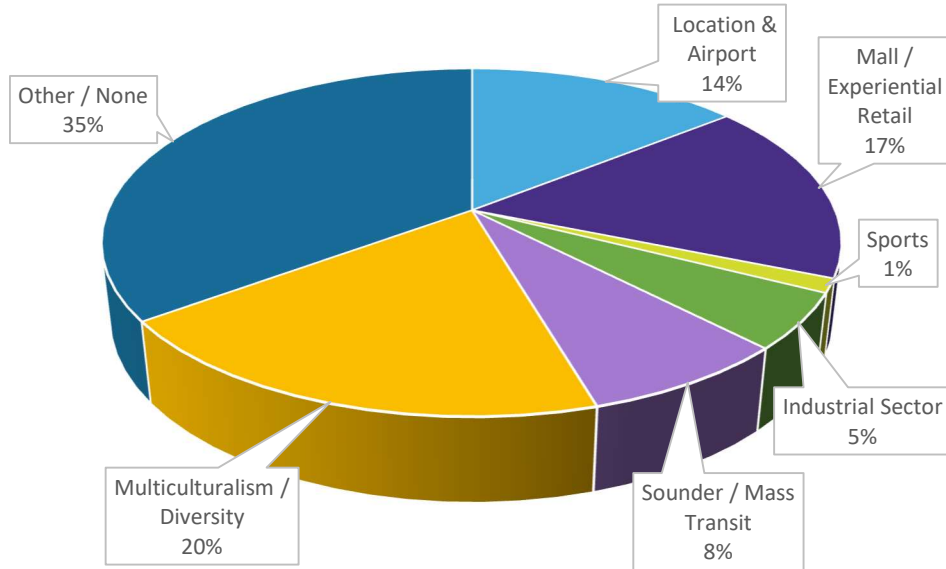
Source: CAI 2023.

4. What types of businesses would you like to see less of in Tukwila?



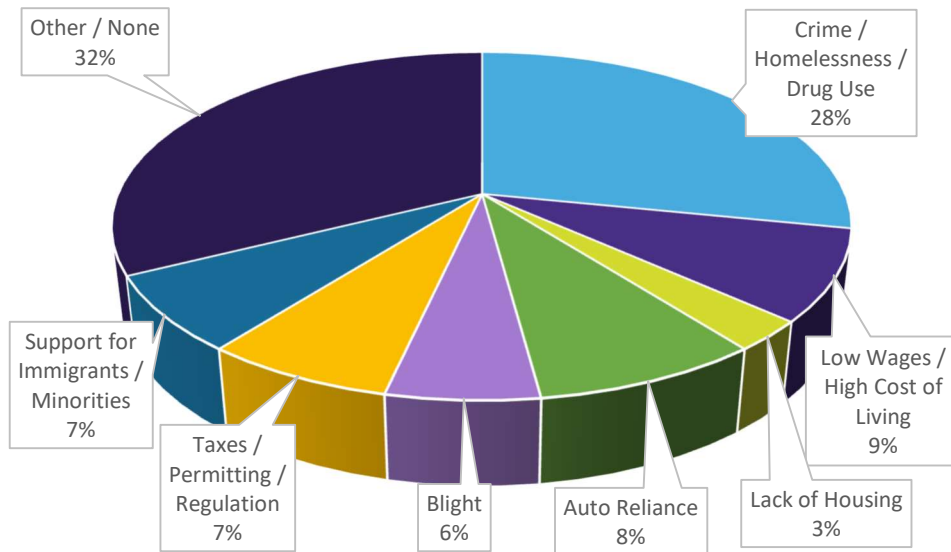
Source: CAI 2023.

5. What are the strengths of Tukwila's business economy? What specific opportunities should the City pursue?



Source: CAI 2023.

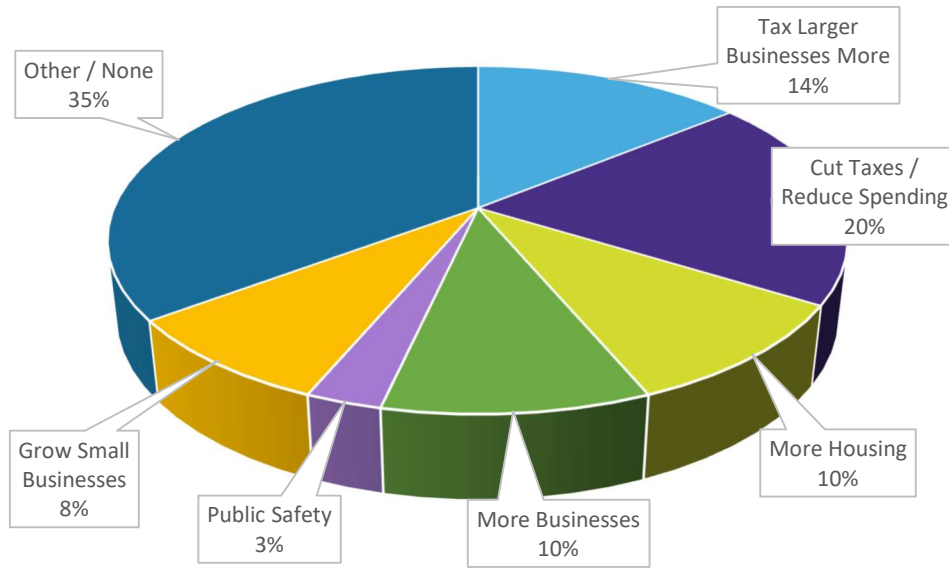
6. What are the weaknesses of Tukwila's business economy? What specific challenges might be holding the City's economy back?



Source: CAI 2023.

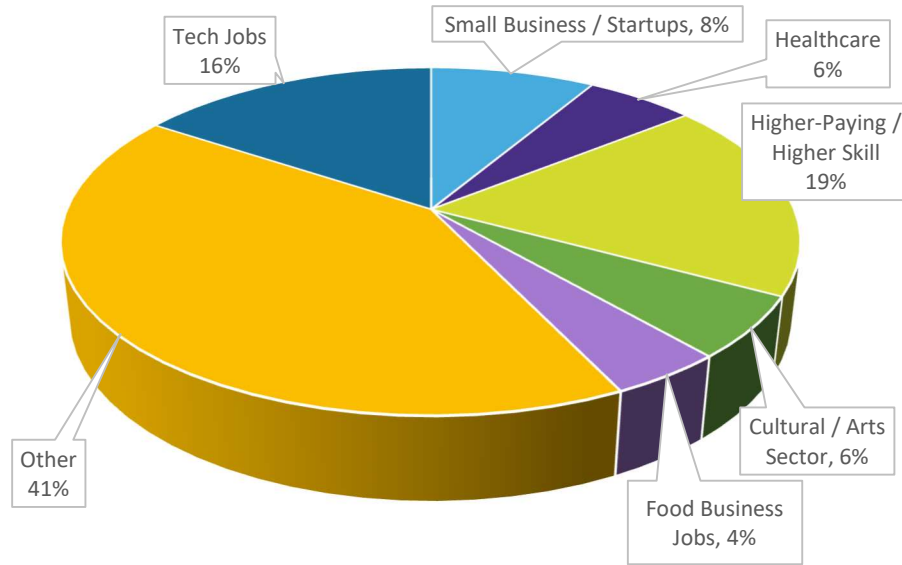


7. What are your ideas for increasing Tukwila's tax revenue?



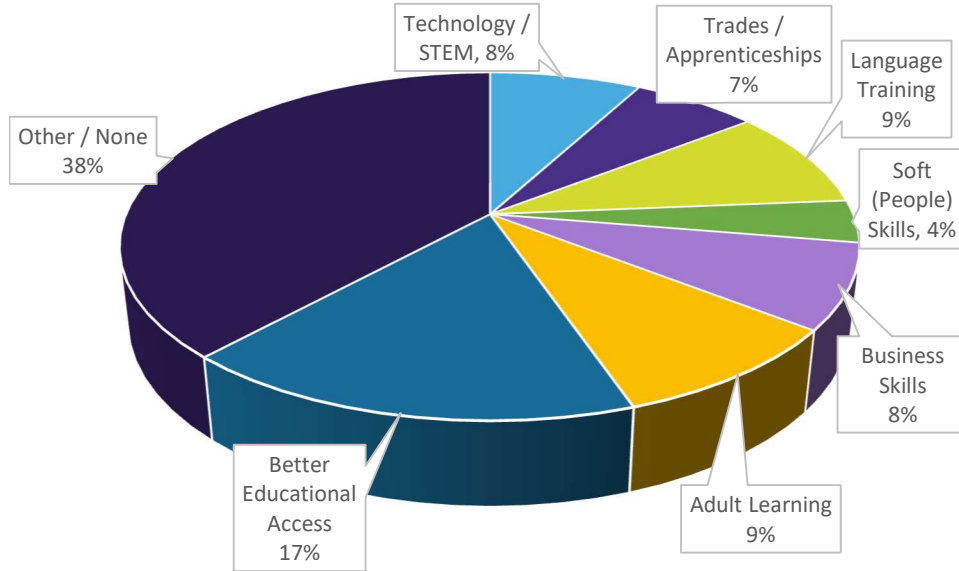
Source: CAI 2023.

8. What kind of jobs would you like to see more of in Tukwila? What are the barriers keeping people from these jobs?



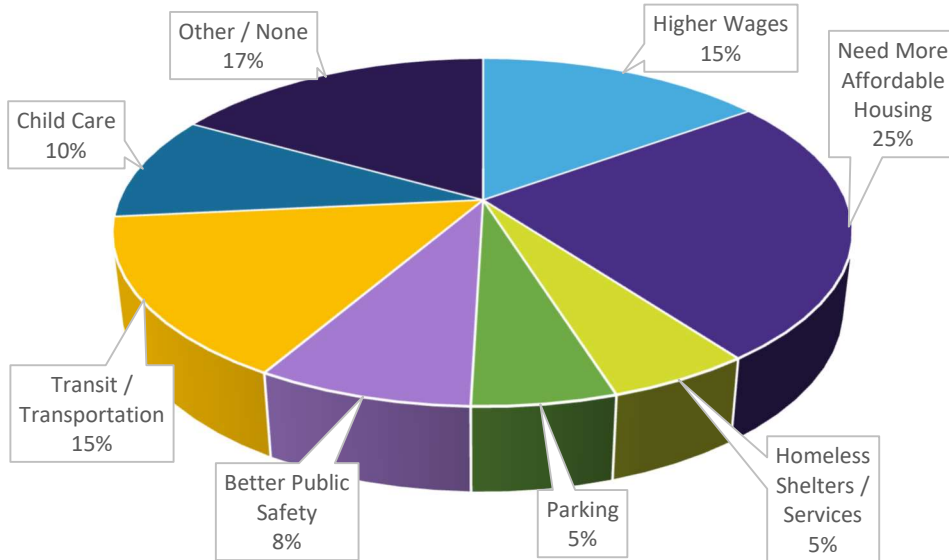
Source: CAI 2023.

9. What are the greatest needs in terms of skills development, education, or job training for Tukwila's workers?



Source: CAI 2023.

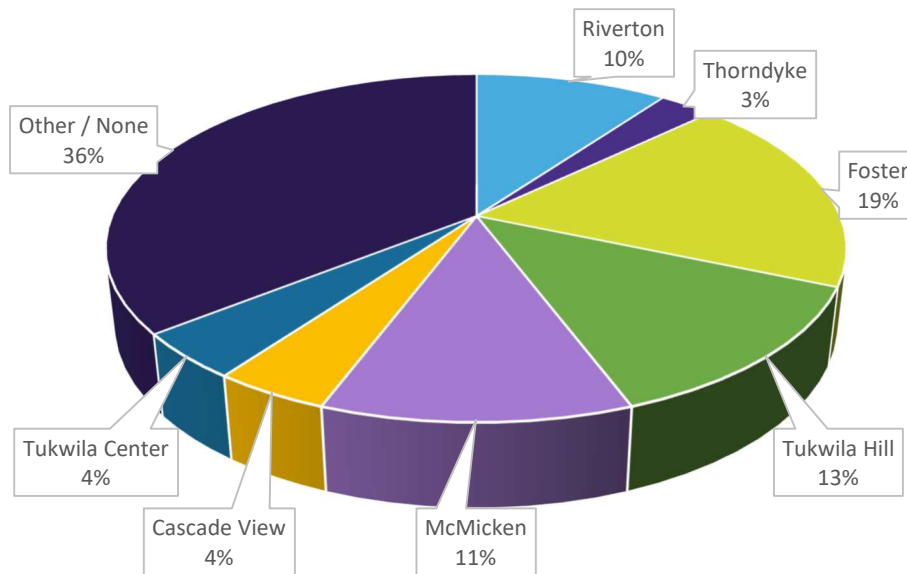
10. What are Tukwila workers' greatest challenges, issues, or needs? (For example, income, housing, childcare, or transportation.)



Source: CAI 2023.

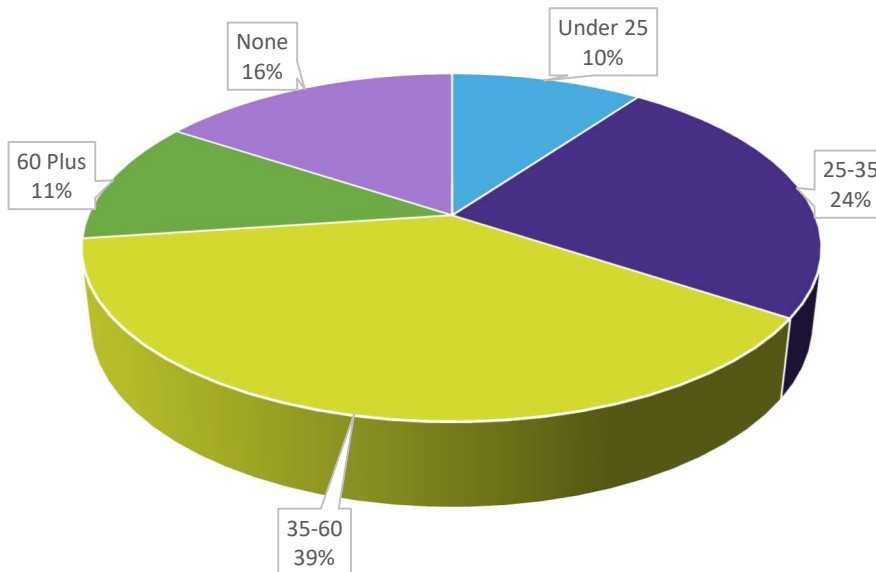
## About You Questions

### 1. Respondent Neighborhood



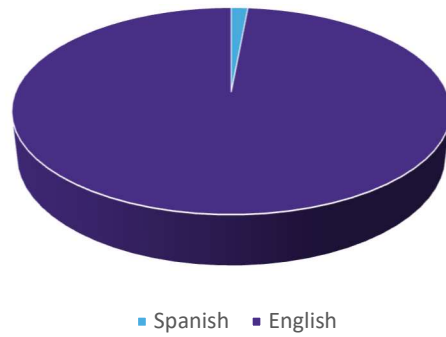
Source: CAI 2023.

### 2. Respondent Age Group



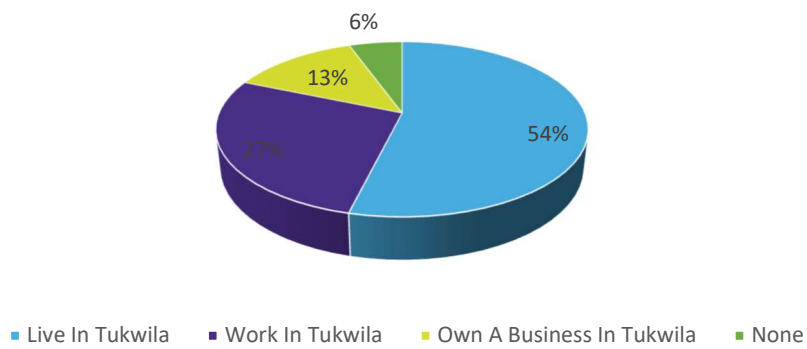
Source: CAI 2023.

### 3. Respondent Language Used



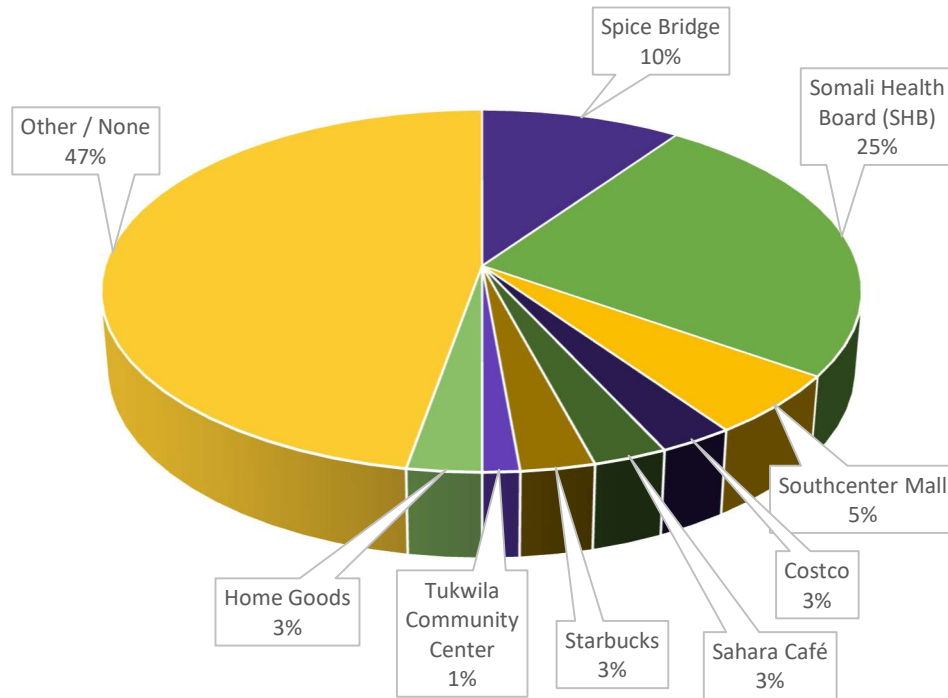
Source: CAI 2023.

### 4. Select all that apply; I live in Tukwila, I work in Tukwila, I own a business and/or manage in Tukwila



Source: CAI 2023.

5. What is your favorite business in Tukwila?



Source: CAI 2023.

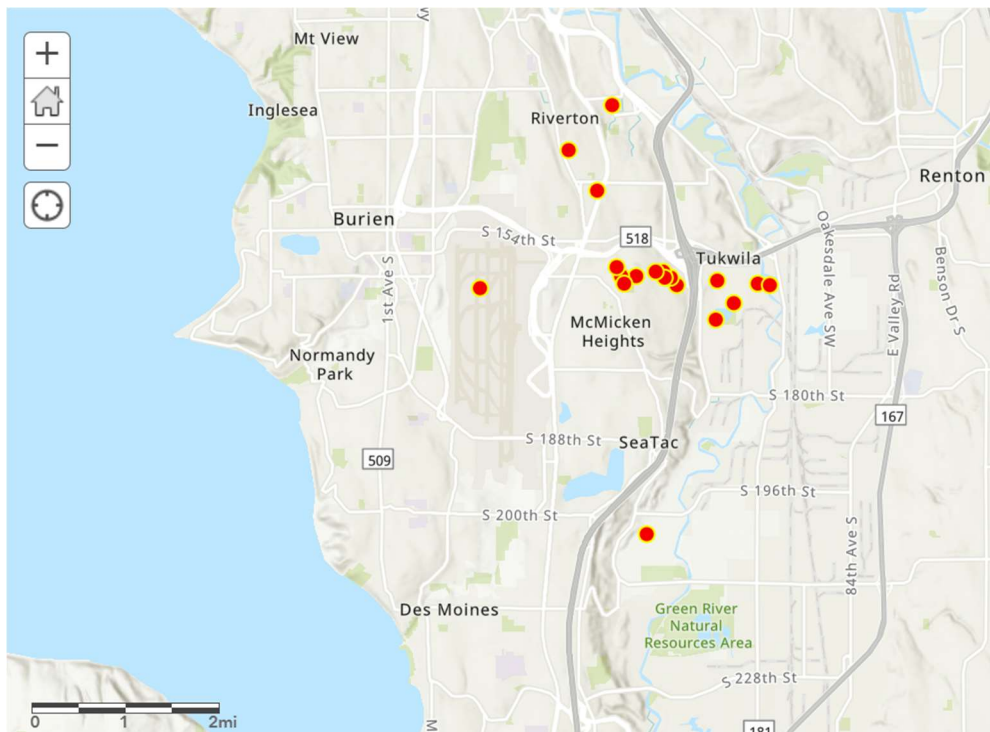
### List of Popup Installations and Listening Sessions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Activity</u>
7/28/2022	6:30 PM	Committee	Planning Commission
8/2/2022	6:30 PM	Committee	Library Advisory Board
8/4/2022	5:30 PM	Committee	Equity and Social Justice Commission
8/11/2022	6:30 PM	Committee	Community Oriented Policing Advisory Board
8/12/2022	11:30 AM	Committee	Lodging Tax Advisory Board
8/25/2022	6:00 PM	Committee	Arts Commission
-	5:00 PM	Committee	Civil Service Commission
10/4/2022	6:30 PM	Committee	Library Advisory Board
10/13/2022	6:30 PM	Committee	Community Oriented Policing Advisory Board
10/25/2022	10:00 AM	Committee	Human Services Advisory Board
11/30/2022	6:00 PM	Committee	Arts Commission
12/14/2022	5:30 PM	Committee	Parks Commission
6/22/2023	6:30 PM	Committee	Planning Commission
7/6/2023	5:30 PM	Committee	Equity and Social Justice Commission
9/28/2023	6:30 PM	Committee	Planning Commission
10/20/2022	-	CBO	SeaTac Tukwila Community Coalition
11/10/2022	-	CBO	Rotary
12/2/2022	-	CBO	STCC Community Leaders

12/8/2022	-	CBO	Black Student Union at Foster High
7/27/2022	8:00 - 11:00 PM	General Public	See You in the Park @ TCC (movie)
8/2/2022	5:00 - 8:00 PM	General Public	National Night Out
8/3/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
8/10/2022	6:00 - 8:00 PM	General Public	See You in the Park @ Riverton (Park-A-Lympics)
8/10/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
8/17/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
8/24/2022	6:00 - 8:00 PM	General Public	See You in the Park @ Crestview (Bark in the Park)
8/24/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
8/31/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
10/5/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
10/12/2022	4:00 - 7:00 PM	General Public	Tukwila Farmers Market
12/13/2022	-	General Public	Saar's Supersaver Grocery Store
-	-	General Public	Tukwila Pantry
-	-	General Public	TCC Spraypark

## Online Interactive Map Comments & Pin Locations (Last Accessed July 17, 2023)

Exhibit X. Interactive Survey Comments Map



Sources: ESRI 2023; City of Tukwila, 2022; Community Attributes, Inc., 2023.

1. Great to have a supermarket in Tukwila
2. Alliance Residential plans to build new apartments on this corner.

3. The bus stop needs a bus shelter for customers to wait for the bus.
4. Utilize the river as an amenity for businesses and residents throughout Southcenter. This will attract people to establish businesses and to live in Tukwila. It is well known that employers seek out attractive locations to set up business in order to attract their workforce. Enhance trail connections, water access, open space, floodplain and habitat; include an 'art walk' and interpretive signage about habitat, culture and history.
5. Need pedestrian cross walks at East Marginal and 40th Ave S intersection, and at west access into Riverton Park
6. The airport is an asset that brings visitors to our region.
7. Would love to see a large lounge-style cafe in the Southcenter area! Our only coffee shops outside the mall is Starbucks.
8. It is unclear where appropriate parking is along this stretch of road. Having the curb painted to delineate that would be very helpful. Also, there has been an abandoned car sitting there for over three weeks and no one will do anything about it.
9. Very dangerous intersection. Needs to have either three way stop or traffic light installed. Not safe for the dozens of pedestrians that walk the area.
10. 160th is subject to excessive speeding. The speed bumps do not make any impact on people's speed. Dangerous for the neighborhood which is full of walkers and young children.
11. City should purchase this land, as it is attached to the park.
12. Improvements on the upper park connecting to the lower park should be made ADA, it is impossible to get down to the lower park with a stroller or if a person were in need of a modified walking situation. The street is too steep and requires you to navigate very dangerous intersections.
13. Very dangerous intersection - three way stop or traffic light needs to be placed. Not safe for drivers or pedestrians.
14. Community Garden would be amazing here.
15. Would be great to add lighting to the park.
16. Abandoned home - good location for park, community garden, small coffee house.

## **Focus Group Questions**

The following questions formed the basis of focus group topics of discussion.

### **Economic Diversification Focus Group**

1. What assets does Tukwila offer to prospective businesses, and which industries have historically seen these as most advantageous?
2. Which industries that have not traditionally landed in Tukwila, but which are (or will be) present in the region, might also see value in these assets?
3. What specific things can the City of Tukwila do to attract these and other businesses?

### Identity, Marketing, Promotion and Image Focus Group

1. What is Tukwila currently known for throughout the region? How do perceptions of Tukwila vary across audiences?
2. Which of Tukwila's best qualities are least well known throughout the region?
3. How can Tukwila improve its image and level-up its marketing and promotion efforts?

### Retail, Dining and Entertainment Focus Group

1. What are the biggest assets and attractions in Tukwila, and are any of them under-leveraged?
2. Which demographic segments of the regional market would find a lot to do in Tukwila? Which wouldn't?
3. What gaps exist in Tukwila's current offerings? Are there specific facilities or events that could make Tukwila a more attractive destination?
4. What specific investments, policy changes, etc. could the City of Tukwila make to improve its offerings across retail, dining and entertainment?

### Vibrant, Thriving Community and Quality of Life Focus Group

1. What are the big 1- and 3-year priorities for your department? How do those relate to economic development for Tukwila?
2. What challenges, concerns or requests do you hear most often from Tukwila residents, employees, or business owners?
3. What are the biggest constraints you have in achieving your department's goals?
4. What are some creative ideas you or your staff have had for fostering greater quality of life in Tukwila?

### Workforce Development and Access to Opportunity Focus Group

1. Who are Tukwila's primary education, workforce development, and skills training partners, and what roles do each play?
2. What gaps exist between these partners and their roles?
3. How well do opportunities for education and training align with in demand industries and occupations in Tukwila and south King County?
4. What career pathways are of interest and are there adequate opportunities for the requisite education and training?



## Small Business and Entrepreneurship Focus Group

1. From your perspective, what are the biggest economic issues facing you, your business, or your sector now? Did that change during the pandemic?
2. What was the biggest challenge you had in starting your business? Was it technical support, access to capital, marketing, finding staff, etc.?
3. What is the city doing well to support small businesses and entrepreneurship?
4. What services, support, or other actions do you wish the city would undertake to support small businesses and entrepreneurship?



# City of Tukwila Existing Conditions and Landscape Assessment

Economic Development Strategy

October 30, 2023

Prepared by:



Prepared for:



CITY OF  
**TUKWILA**



*Community Attributes Inc. tells data-rich stories about communities  
that are important to decision makers.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Tukwila is in the process of creating an Economic Development Strategy. This Landscape Assessment informs the Strategy by providing an inventory and analysis of current planning as well as documenting socioeconomic conditions and trends in Tukwila. City staff and leadership provided insight into existing conditions as well as some previous research into demographic conditions. A concurrent survey of residents, workers, and businesses and additional engagement activities will inform the Strategy alongside this assessment.

Tukwila is racially and ethnically diverse and has a high number of foreign-born residents. Tukwila households speak multiple languages, and many have limited English proficiency. The city has fewer young residents than it did in 2010. Households are more likely to be renters with larger families, lower incomes and education levels, and higher cost-burden and housing instability compared to the region. Incomes have increased alongside a local and regional rise in rents, but homeownership is increasingly unaffordable or unattainable. Tukwila has a high share of renters and around half are cost burdened or severely so.

Tukwila's economy has seen modest employment losses in some sectors and growth in others over the past decade. The three largest job sectors in Tukwila are Services, Manufacturing, and Retail. The highest growth industry is Construction followed by Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE), Healthcare, and Information. Higher wage industries are Government, Services, and Construction. Tukwila's residents are employed in areas across the region in a wide range of occupational sectors with a larger share of residents employed in Government, Health, and Education. Relatively few Tukwila residents also work in Tukwila with many instead commuting to Seattle. As a result, Tukwila's employers appear to draw a low share of their workforce from the resident population.

Tukwila benefits from the different perspectives and culture that are present in an area of significant diversity. The many businesses owned by immigrants and refugees and the languages spoken among its residents position it as a connector community for those seeking to engage with different cultures and community both locally and regionally.

This analysis provides background information that will be instrumental in helping the city inform decisions and investments related to its retail, entertainment, and other industries; business expansion; commitments to education and training for residents; and sustaining tax revenues for service provision while maintaining a diversity of area businesses and economic opportunity for all residents and workers.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background and Purpose

The City of Tukwila is creating an Economic Development Strategy (Strategy) to guide its efforts to strengthen Tukwila’s economic future. This Landscape Assessment will inform the recommendations at the heart of the Strategy. The primary purpose of the Strategy is to describe Tukwila’s vision for sustainable and inclusive economic prosperity and to identify strategies and actions to achieve that vision. The Strategy will also inform the next update of Tukwila’s Comprehensive Plan.

The Landscape Assessment helps build a common understanding of Tukwila’s current role in the regional economy, including relevant research and information about regional and industry trends affecting the city, local socioeconomic conditions, and other key economic issues. It includes comparisons to neighboring jurisdictions and King County to provide additional context. The Landscape Assessment is also instrumental in framing Tukwila’s vision and goals as it engages the community in developing the Strategy.

## Organization of this Report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- **Findings and Implications** summarizes the key takeaways and their implications from the analysis conducted in the Landscape Assessment.
- **Current Planning and Policy Context** summarizes the current economic development and other related local, county, and regional plans.
- **Socioeconomic Analysis** highlights historic and projected demographic and economic trends, analysis of current jobs and employment, and an assessment of conditions and trends of Tukwila’s resident workforce.
- **Economic Indicators** includes total and industry-specific employment, cost of living, and industry and firm dynamics.
- **Workforce Indicators** include occupational characteristics and capacities.
- **Fiscal Impacts of Land Use** assess the fiscal impacts associated with Tukwila’s major land use categories.
- **Smart Cities Literature Review** briefly assesses the economic impacts of adopting “smart city” policies in Tukwila.
- **Infrastructure Assessment** reviews existing studies and plans to identify infrastructure deficiencies and assesses anticipated investments that directly impact infrastructure capacity in Tukwila.
- **Appendices** include supportive content including a SWOT analysis.



## FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

### Findings

#### Current Planning and Policy Context

- Existing plans and strategies for economic development continue to have relevance for economic conditions and needs in Tukwila. This includes an emphasis on “A Diverse and Regionally Competitive Economy (one of the Strategic Plan’s organizing goals), a distinct focus on strengthening the City’s engagement and partnership with the business community, cultivating improvement and diversity in the City’s stock of business space, and ensuring that equity and resiliency sit at the forefront of economic development in Tukwila.

#### Socioeconomic Analysis

##### Demographic Characteristics

- Tukwila has grown at an inconsistent rate in the last 10 years, adding only 400 people in the first half of the last decade and over 2,000 people from 2015-2020
- Since 2010, Tukwila has had a declining share of people under 20, the senior population (over 65) has increased, and millennials remain the most prevalent age group.
- Tukwila’s population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse and no racial group constitutes a majority.
- Over 40% of Tukwila’s population are foreign born residents and more than half speak a language other than English at home.
- A large share of Tukwila’s population has limited English proficiency and many households report speaking English less than “very well.”

##### Household and Housing Characteristics

- Larger households (over three-persons) account for 43% of total households in Tukwila.
- Tukwila’ households with children have declined alongside singles, while those with seniors have grown.
- Tukwila continues to have a very large share of renters (61%) relative to its comparison cities and King County (ranging from 41% to 51%).
- The 2020 median household income in Tukwila (\$66,131) was significantly lower than King County (\$99,158) and most of its comparison cities, and over one third of Tukwila’s households earn less than \$40,000 per year.
- Close to half of Tukwila’s renters are either cost-burdened<sup>1</sup> or severely cost-burdened (49%) while the County has a lower share.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines cost burden as those households spending between 30% and 50% of total income on housing. Severe cost burden is defined as households spending more than 50% of total income on housing.

- Over one third of surveyed households in the Seattle MSA indicated they could face possible eviction or foreclosure in the next two months, which may have an outsized impact on Tukwila due to the large share of both renters and cost-burdened renters present in the city.

## Economic Indicators

### Employment

- Tukwila could add more than 20,000 jobs by 2050 if it maintains its current share of regional employment (2% of regional employment), but a decline at the same rate as 2015 to 2020 would result in 9,000 fewer jobs by 2050.
- The largest share of Tukwila’s jobs is in Services (35%), Manufacturing (18%), and Retail (15%) industries.
- Tukwila has a lower share of jobs in the Services sector and a higher share in Manufacturing and Retail relative to King County.

### Cost of Living

- While the rise in median incomes have largely kept pace with increasing rents, homeownership is becoming more unattainable, and rents remain high for those on a limited income.

### Industries and Firms

- Tukwila’s highest growth industries are Construction followed by FIRE, Health, and Information; Retail and Manufacturing continue to hold a high number of jobs, but Retail growth is slower, and Manufacturing has had job losses since 2010.
- Tukwila has consistently had higher taxable retail sales than its comparison cities, it faced significant declines from 2019 to 2020, and it has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- The largest share of retail sales in Tukwila are in Clothing and Clothing Accessories (\$226 million), which faced steep declines in 2020 and has not yet fully recovered.
- Around 87% of Tukwila’s businesses have less than 25 employees and an average firm size of 15 employees.
- Almost half of the businesses in Tukwila rely on less than 10,000 square feet and over one third use less than 5,000 square feet of commercial space.
- Median wages are lower in Tukwila than King County across all industries, but the higher wage industries are Government, Services, and Construction.

## Workforce Indicators

### Occupational Characteristics

- Tukwila faces lower education levels relative to King County and comparison cities with one-fifth of the population 25 years old and older

without High School education (20%) and less than one quarter (22%) with a bachelor's degree or above.

- Tukwila residents work in a wide range of industry sectors, and the largest share are employed in Government, and Health and Education (21%).

#### **Labor-Shed and Commute-Shed**

- Tukwila has over four times the number of jobs as residents despite the addition of over 1,000 housing units since 2010.
- Of the jobs in Tukwila, only 2% are filled by workers who live in Tukwila. The largest share of workers employed in Tukwila live in Seattle (13%) and 17% live in other cities immediately adjacent to Tukwila.
- A large share of Tukwila residents who are in the workforce commute to Seattle (37.5%) and adjacent cities (22.7%) for work, while 8% remain in the city for work.

### **Implications**

The city's economic development planning aligns with stated economic development goals and focus areas at the regional and county level, but there are opportunities for Tukwila to better align its economic development strategies with more recent economic recovery frameworks and initiatives. This may include better highlighting the regional significance of and activating investment in Tukwila, advancing strategies for an inclusive economy and resiliency for workers and community, highlighting investments that link businesses' economic contributions to community benefits, and establishing more detailed strategies specific to the needs of both emerging and legacy industries.

Tukwila's Economic Development Strategy will need to focus on securing inclusive and equitable economic outcomes. City residents will face more challenges and systemic barriers based in racial inequities than other parts of King County due to higher levels of economic insecurity and racial and ethnic diversity. Tukwila's economic future is also intimately tied to the regional economy due to a significant dependence on adjacent jurisdictions for its labor pool and employment opportunities for the city's residents. The Strategy will also need to outline opportunities to address Tukwila's high jobs-to-housing units insofar as the city must provide the level of transportation investment needed for in-commuting workers and may have a limited supply of housing for workers who would prefer to also live in Tukwila. Finally, the Strategy will need to identify opportunities for businesses of all sizes, with particular attention to opportunities to scale up given the large share of Tukwila businesses with few employees operate out of commercial space with limited square footage.

## **CURRENT PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT**

While this Economic Development Strategy is Tukwila’s first official economic strategy, there is a long history of addressing economic issues as part of local planning and policy development. This section summarizes existing and ongoing planning efforts related to economic development, organized from regional and county-wide policies to increasingly local planning activity.

## **Forward Together: An Economic Recovery Framework for Greater Seattle**

Recovery planning and investment conducted by Greater Seattle Partners in 2021 resulted in a set of goals and strategies that focus on realigning economic and workforce development programs to create a more broad, inclusive economy and promoting sustainable economic growth to address resiliency needs alongside a sustained focus on economic competitiveness, regionwide investment, and a focus on post-pandemic opportunities for both traditional and emerging industries. A summary of the relevant strategies informing Tukwila’s Strategy from this framework is included in Appendix A.

## **Puget Sound Regional Council – Regional Economic Strategy and Vision 2050**

The most recent version of the Regional Economic Strategy uses a dual approach to economic development. First, it aims to address the near-term challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic faced by the region’s workers and businesses. Second, it identifies ways to continue to advance the long-term success of the region’s economy. A summary of the PSRC’s Vision 2050 is included in Appendix A.

## **King County Comprehensive Plan –Economic Development (Chapter 10)**

In its commitment to foster a prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy, the County recognizes that it must support actions and programs to promote the success of both businesses and the workforce.

The foundation for a vibrant and sustainable economy starts with providing livable communities and a high quality of life; a favorable business climate with consistent and predictable regulations, an educated and trained workforce, adequate public infrastructure, land supply, research and advancing technology, affordable housing, available capital, recreational and cultural opportunities, a healthy natural environment and greater equity and opportunity for all.

Policies focus on long-term commitment to a prosperous, diverse, and sustainable economy by promoting public programs and actions that create

the foundation for a successful economy. A successful economy is one in which the private, nonprofit, and public sectors can thrive and create jobs compatible with the environment and community and land use expectations. A successful and diverse economy contributes to a strong and stable tax base and a high quality of life for all residents. The County recognizes businesses and the workforce as customers of an economic development system and supports actions and programs that promote the strength and health of both groups.

## **2015 City of Tukwila Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element**

In 2015 the City adopted the current Comprehensive Plan and it includes a chapter on economic development. That chapter states that “the City of Tukwila is committed to the economic well-being of its residents, property owners, and businesses because an adequate tax base is necessary to help achieve the City’s vision for the future. The most obvious role is for the City to provide adequate services and infrastructure to complement the retail, manufacturing uses, offices, and residences that are located in the City. The City’s plans, programs, policies, taxes, and service levels can encourage economic activity.”

## **City of Tukwila Strategic Plan**

In 2012, Tukwila created a Strategic Plan, and one of the five goals and objectives was “A Diverse and Regionally Competitive Economy.” The Strategic Plan was updated and amended in 2018. That Plan states that “The City’s economic development efforts will continue to be multipronged, addressing three aspects of the City’s economy:

- Protecting the City’s role as a strong regional retail center and preparing for the retail market of the future.
- Supporting the retention and expansion of the City’s commercial and industrial businesses.
- Cultivating the success of the City’s entrepreneurs and small businesses, including businesses owned by refugees, immigrants, and non-native English speakers.”

A prominent goal in the Strategic Plan calls for “A Solid Foundation for All Tukwila Residents,” and serves as an indicator for commitments to equitable access to opportunity.

## **Equity Policy**

In 2017, Tukwila passed resolution 1921 to establish the City of Tukwila Equity Policy and affirm its commitment to being an inclusive community that provides equal access to all City services. The Equity Policy defines

equity has “eliminating systemic barriers and providing fair access to programs, services and opportunities to achieve social, civic and economic justice within the City of Tukwila”. Relevant policy goals speak to commitments to workforce diversity and related recruitment and hiring commitments; intentional and inclusive outreach; equitable delivery of city services; commitments to equity in decision-making; and equity strategies as a core value for long-term plans and focus for local capacity-building through an Equity Policy Implementation Committee.

Economic commitments center around support for workforce diversity; inequitable access to opportunities and services; and ensuring all residents, visitors and employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The City highlights how it benefits from different perspectives and cultures among its residents and the variety of businesses owned by immigrants and refugees in the community.

## SELECTED COMPARISON JURISDICTIONS

CAI, together with City of Tukwila staff, identified a set of six jurisdictions as a comparative set of communities to provide context in evaluating demographic, economic and workforce conditions in the City of Tukwila. After considering a wider set of jurisdictions, four neighboring cities of Tukwila were selected given their shared position in the region and similar external factors in the economy that impact their communities. The comparison cities evaluated for comparative purposes are **Burien, Des Moines, Renton, and SeaTac. King County** and the **Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area or Greater Seattle Area** were also included to indicate trends and conditions facing the region that may impact Tukwila.

## SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS

To establish an economic strategy that best supports Tukwila’s goals for inclusive economic development, it is essential to understand growth trends, demographics, and other socioeconomic conditions that shape the city’s conditions to leverage the current market and respond to economic needs.

### Demographic Characteristics

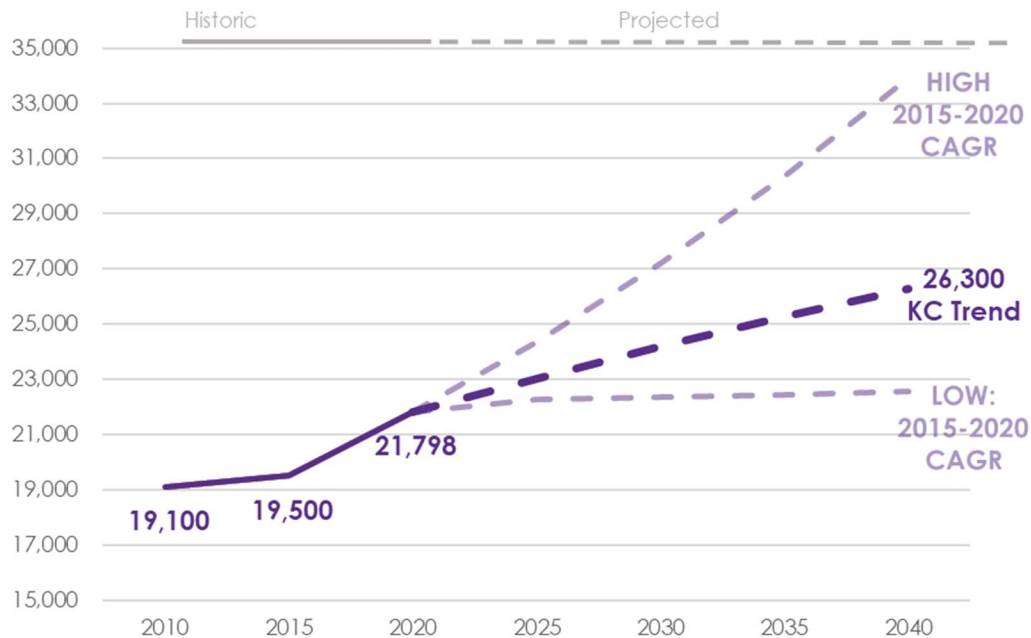
Analyzing population growth helps identify how much growth Tukwila has been experiencing and how much growth is expected in the future, which influences employment patterns and growth needs.

#### Total Population

***Tukwila has grown at an inconsistent rate in the last 10 years, adding only 400 people in the first half of the last decade and over 2,000 people from 2015-2020***

Tukwila’s had a modest increase of 400 people from 2010 to 2015 and a more significant increase of 2,000 people in the five years leading up to 2020 (**Exhibit 1**). The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) forecasts growth rates for each County, providing a low, medium, and high growth scenario. Tukwila would add another 2,000 people by 2030 and reach a population of 26,300 by 2040 if it maintains its share of county growth under OFM’s medium growth forecast scenario. This corresponds to a 1.3% average annual growth rate from 2010 to 2020 and a slowing growth rate through 2040. The highest growth scenario using Tukwila’s 2015-2020 five-year growth rate would add 12,000 people by 2040 and the lowest-growth scenario applying the lowest five-year growth rate from 2010-2015 would result in an additional 750 people.

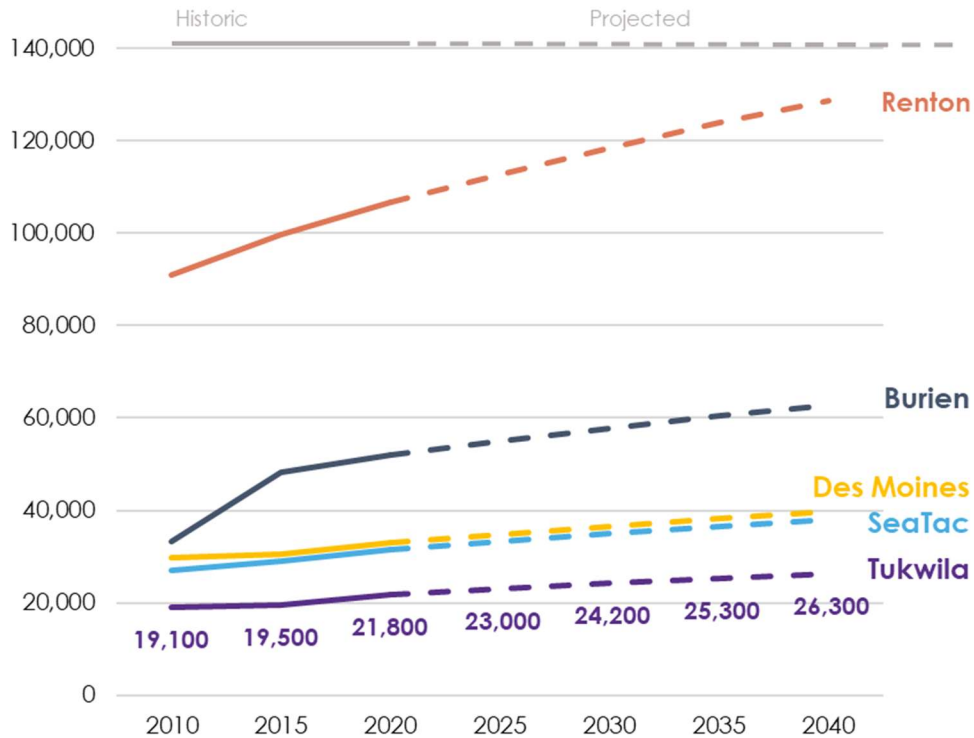
**Exhibit 1. Historic and Population Growth Scenarios, Tukwila, 2010 – 2040**



Source: Office of Financial Management, 2018; CAI, 2022.

Tukwila’s historic population growth is similar to adjacent SeaTac and Des Moines, while Renton grew more rapidly. Burien also faced variable rates of growth. **Exhibit 2** estimates the potential growth of comparison jurisdictions using Office of Financial Management County growth rates and each city’s current share of King County’s population.

**Exhibit 2. Historic and Projected Population, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2010 – 2040**



Source: Office of Financial Management, 2018; CAI, 2022.

**Population by Age**

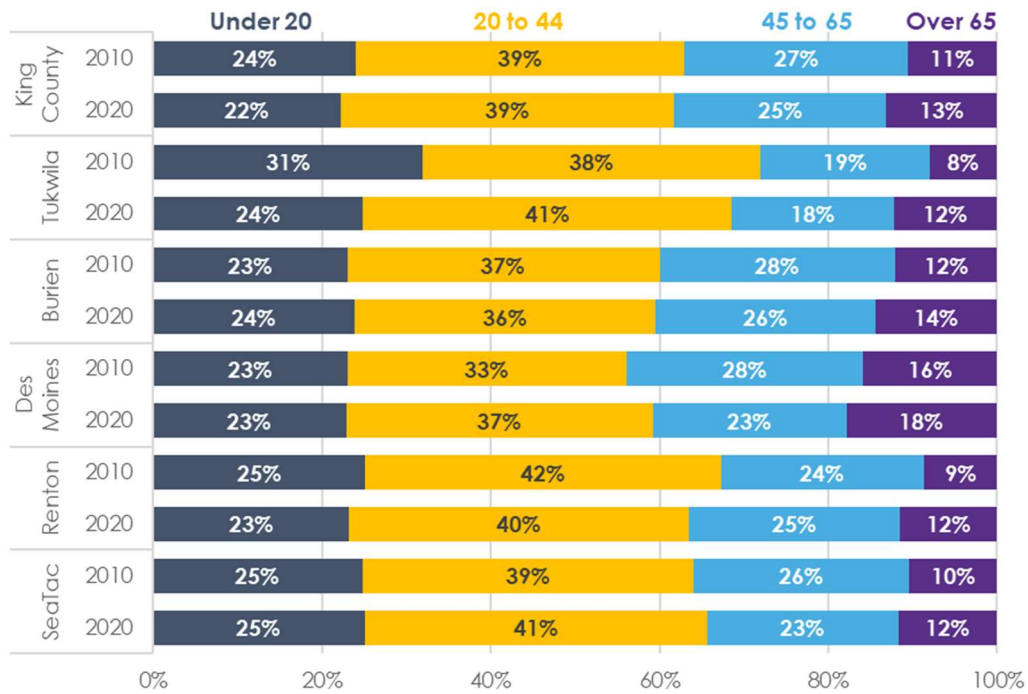
Understanding the distribution of residents’ ages can shed light on shifting demographics that impact the labor pool for area industries and specific demands for housing and community amenities.

*Tukwila has had a declining share of people under 20, the senior population (over 65) has increased, and millennials remain the most prevalent age group*

**Exhibit 3** indicates that Tukwila has had an aging population over the last ten years. Close to one third of Tukwila’s population was under 20-year-olds and people over 65-years made up an 8% share in 2010. In 2020 this shifted to under one quarter share for those under 20-years and 12% share for those over 65-years. Although Tukwila’s population had a large share of under 20-year-olds, the level of decline in under 20-year-olds is not shared by comparison jurisdictions and the county.



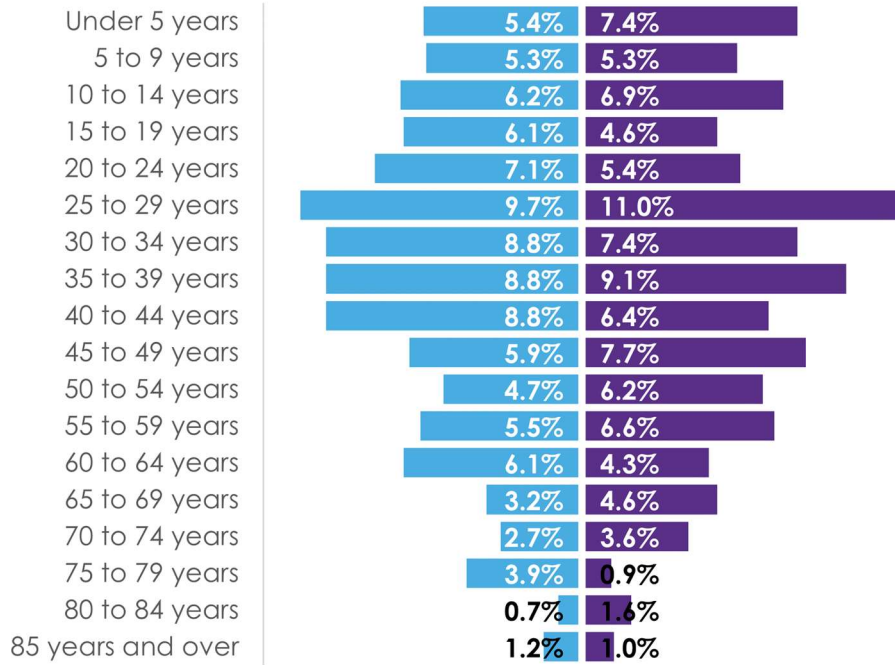
### Exhibit 3. Age of Residents, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2010 and 2020



Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2020; CAI, 2022.

**Exhibit 4** shows the age distribution of Tukwila’s population by gender. With a median age of 37 in 2020, Tukwila’s population is well balanced between male and female residents, with a sex ratio (males per 100 females) of 100.9. The largest age bin, 25-29 years, holds a larger proportion of females as compares to males.

### Exhibit 4. Age by Residents by Gender, Tukwila, 2020



Source: American Community Survey, 2020; CAI, 2022.

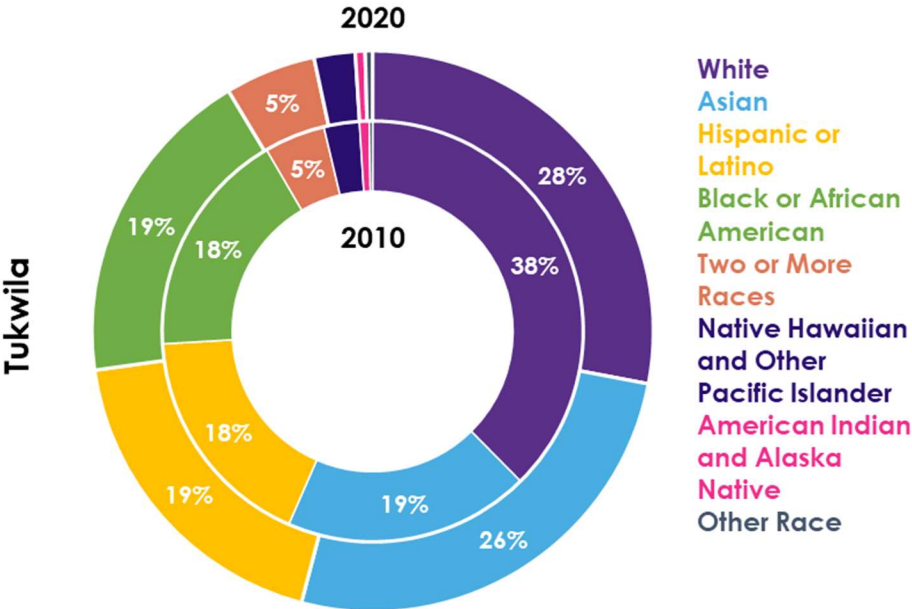
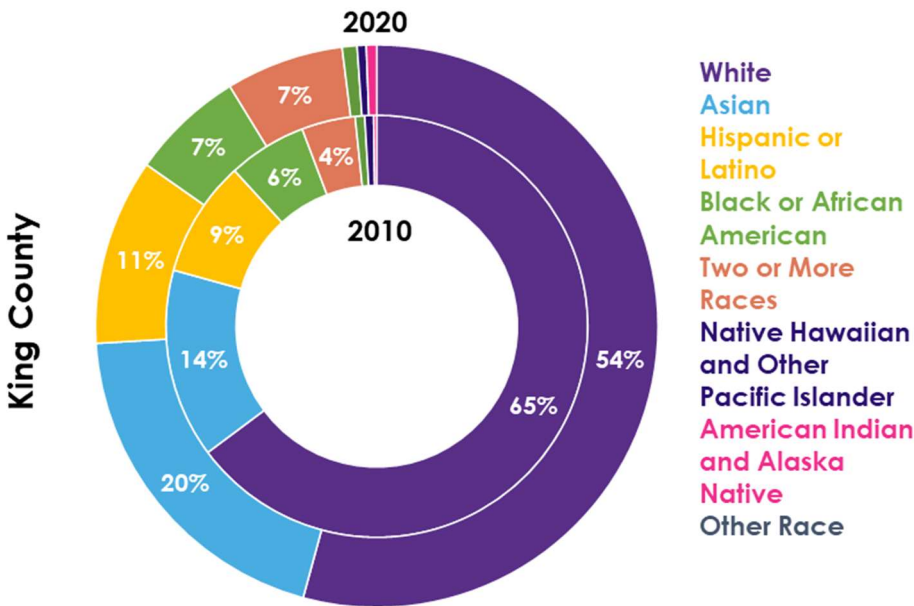
### Population by Race, Immigration Status, and Language Spoken

Understanding the racial and ethnic diversity of city residents helps inform the need for supporting diverse workers and businesses such as addressing cultural or language needs and tailored business and workforce training or support services.

*Diversity continues to grow in Tukwila, a city already more racially and ethnically diverse than the region and in which no racial group constitutes a majority*

**Exhibit 5** indicates that Tukwila is more racially diverse than King County. It had a larger share of non-white population than King County in 2010 and the share of non-white population continued to increase at a similar rate. The non-white share increased from 62% in 2010 to 72% in 2020 for Tukwila. The County had a smaller non-white share of 35% in 2010, and now has a 46% share.

Exhibit 5. Population by Race, Tukwila and King County, 2010 and 2020

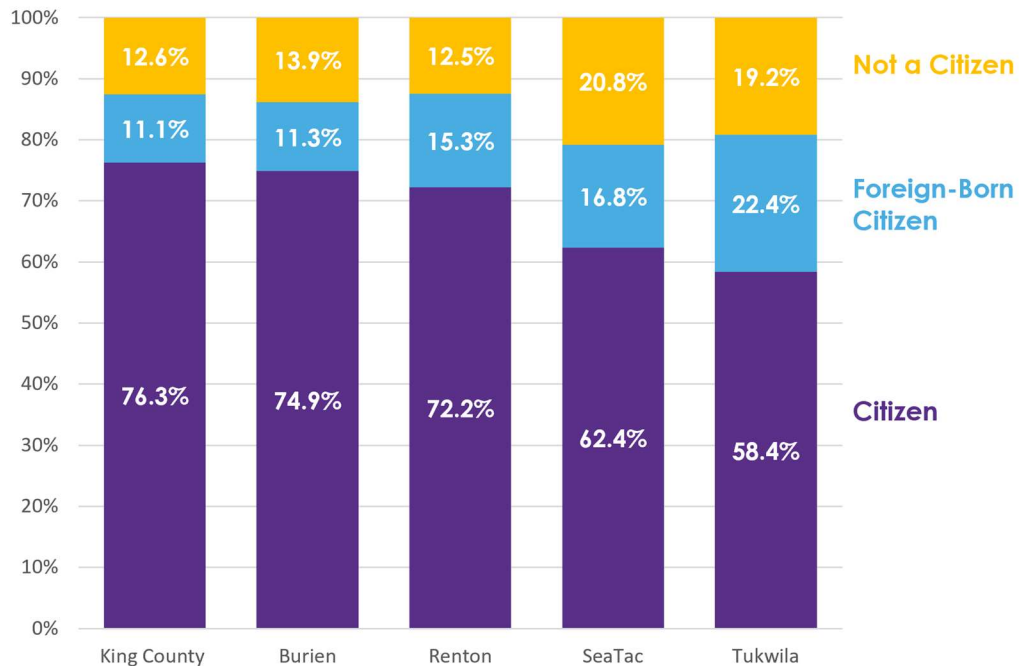


Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

*Over 40% of Tukwila’s population are foreign born residents and more than half speak a language other than English at home*

Tukwila’s population has a larger share of foreign-born citizens (22%) and people that are not a citizen (19%) relative to both King County and most comparison jurisdictions (**Exhibit 6**). SeaTac is the only jurisdiction other than Tukwila that has an immigrant and refugee population that exceeds one third of the total population.

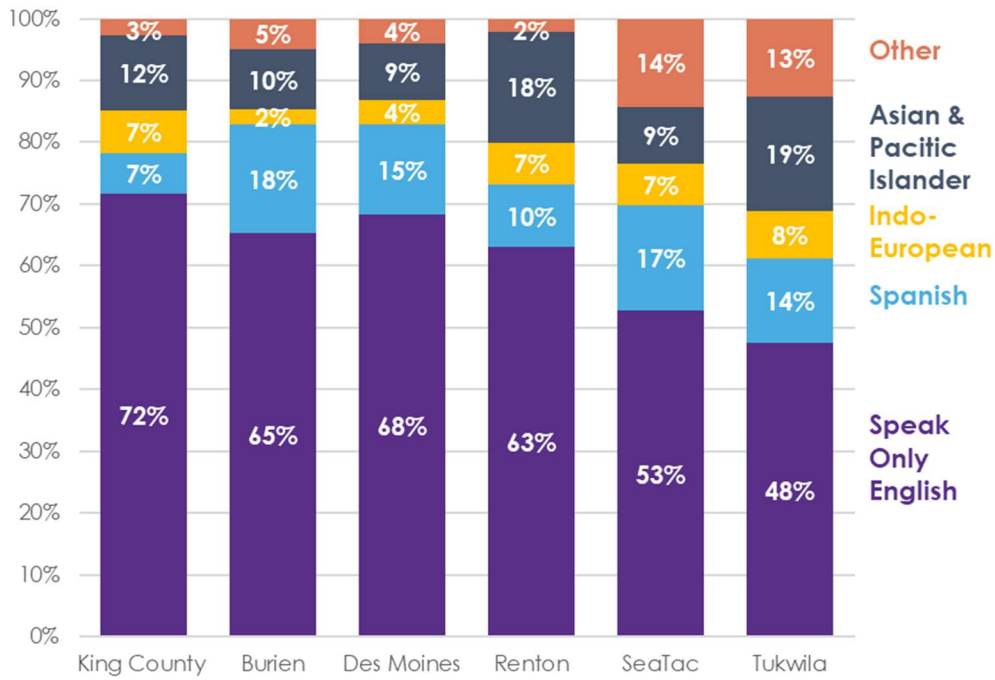
**Exhibit 6. Population by Immigration Status, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions 2020**



Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

**Exhibit 7** also speaks to Tukwila’s heightened level of cultural diversity relative to comparison cities and the county. Less than half of the population speak only English at home and SeaTac is the only city with a larger share of the population that speaks languages other than English, Asian & Pacific Islander, Spanish, and Indo-European.

**Exhibit 7. Percent of Population by Language Spoken at Home, 2020**

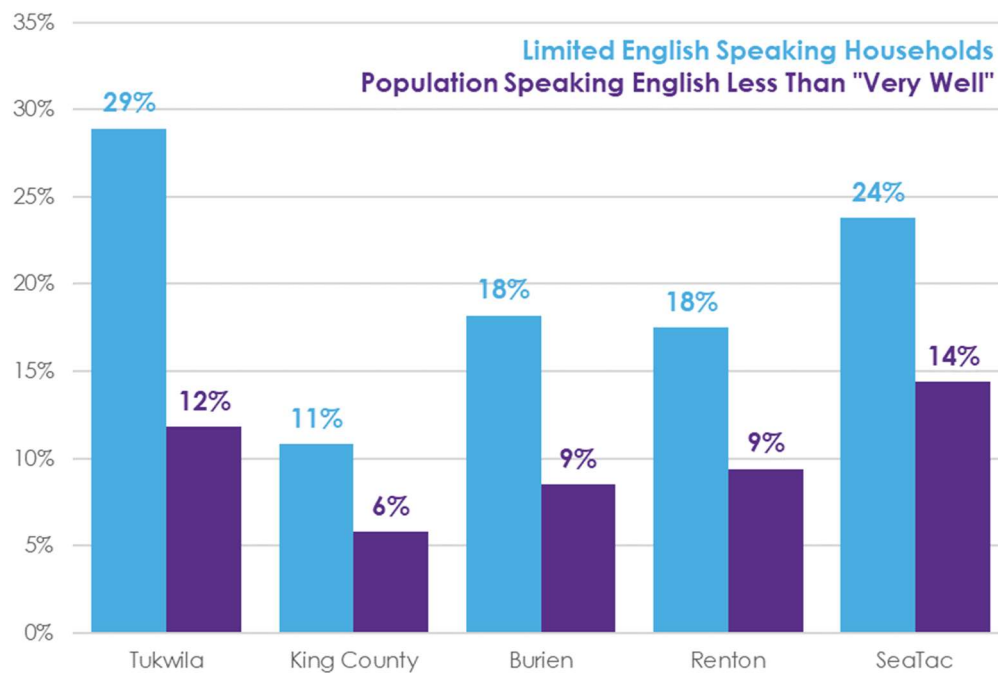


Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

***A large share of Tukwila’s population has limited English proficiency and many households report speaking English less than “very well”***

In addition to the high share of foreign born residents and non-English speakers, Tukwila has more Limited English-speaking households than comparison cities and the County as a whole and only SeaTac has a larger share of population that speaks English less than “Very Well” (**Exhibit 8**). The data do not offer gradations beyond “Very Well” and “Less Than Very Well”. Nearly 30% of all Tukwila households speak limited English, compared to 11% of all King County households.

## Exhibit 8. Population and Households by English Proficiency, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2020



Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

### Household and Housing Characteristics

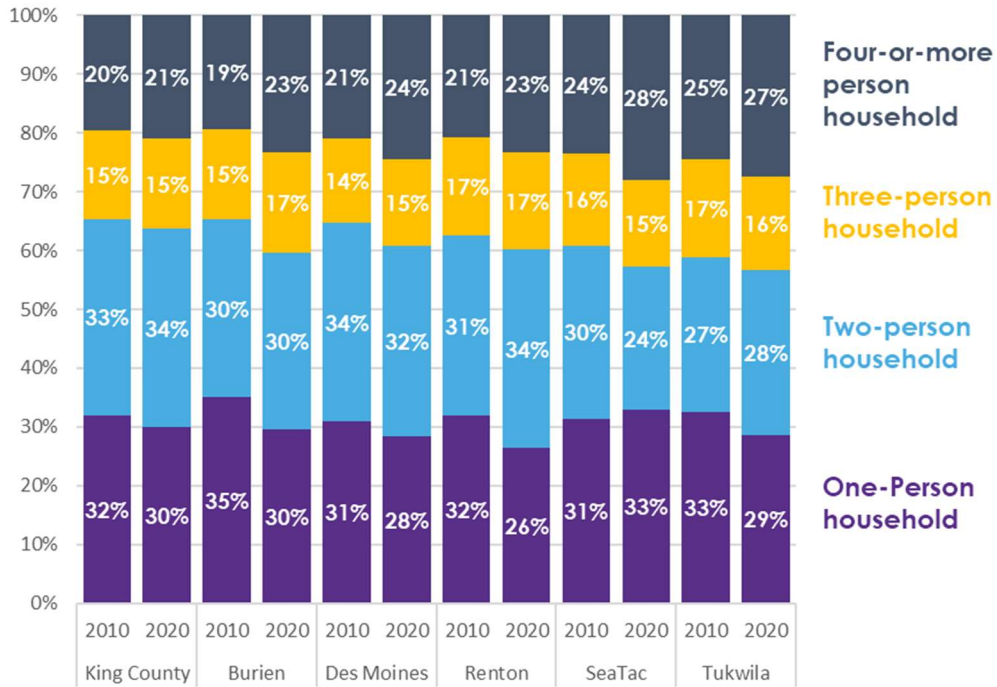
The characteristics and demographics of households may indicate varying wage and occupational needs and certain types, sizes, and styles of housing.

#### Household Size and Type

***Larger households (over three-persons) account for 43% of total households in Tukwila***

Tukwila has a higher share of households with four-or-more people (27%) than almost all comparison cities and King County as a whole (**Exhibit 9**). All comparison jurisdictions saw an increase in household sizes since 2010. Of these, SeaTac has the same share of households with three-or-more people and more growth of larger households since 2010.

**Exhibit 9. Household Size, Tukwila, Comparison Jurisdictions, 2010 and 2020**



Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

***Tukwila households with children have declined alongside singles, while those with seniors have grown***

Over the last ten years, Tukwila’s share of households with children declined from 35% in 2010 to 30% in 2020 (**Exhibit 10**). The share of households with seniors increased from 12% in 2010 to 17% in 2020. A smaller share of households now lives alone and there are fewer households with a disability. Housing, employment and other support needs vary across these household types.

**Exhibit 10. Change in Household Type Distribution, Tukwila, 2010 and 2020**

Household Type	2010	Share	2020	Share
With children	2,483	35%	2,168	30%
With a senior	858	12%	1,233	17%
Persons with disability	2158*	11%	1,816	9%
Living Alone	2,305	33%	2,085	29%
Total Households	7,095		7,302	

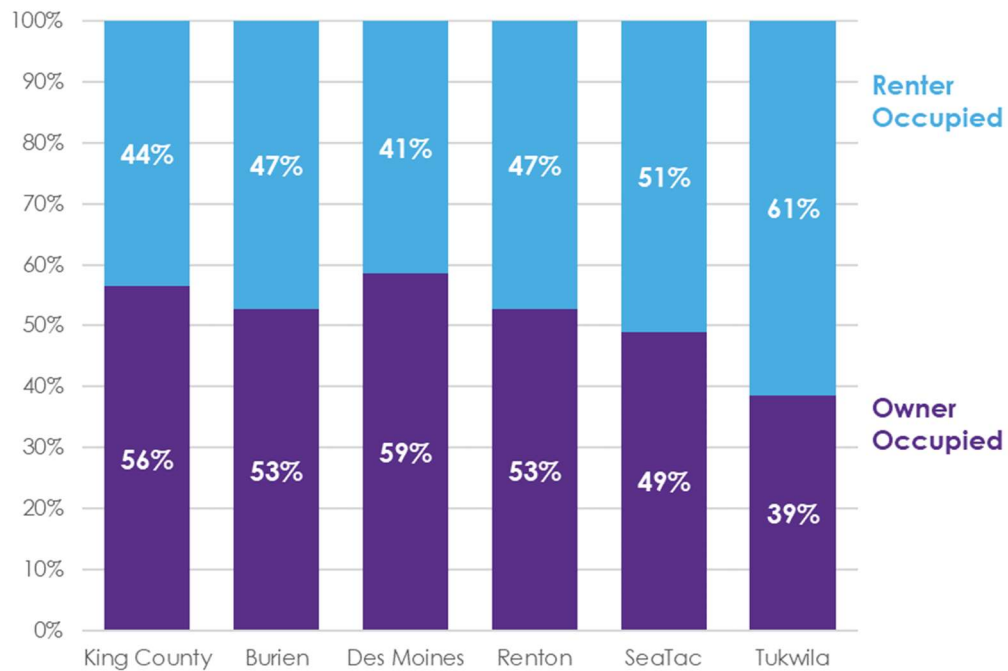
\*ACS 5-year 2012 estimate for Population with a Disability

Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2012, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

*Tukwila continues to have a very large share of renters (61%) relative to comparison cities and King County (ranging from 41% to 51%)*

Tukwila has a much larger share of renters than both comparison cities and King County as a whole (**Exhibit 11**). Over 60% of the housing in Tukwila is renter-occupied, while the county has a 44% share of renters and adjacent SeaTac has a 51% share.

**Exhibit 11. Housing by Tenure, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2020**

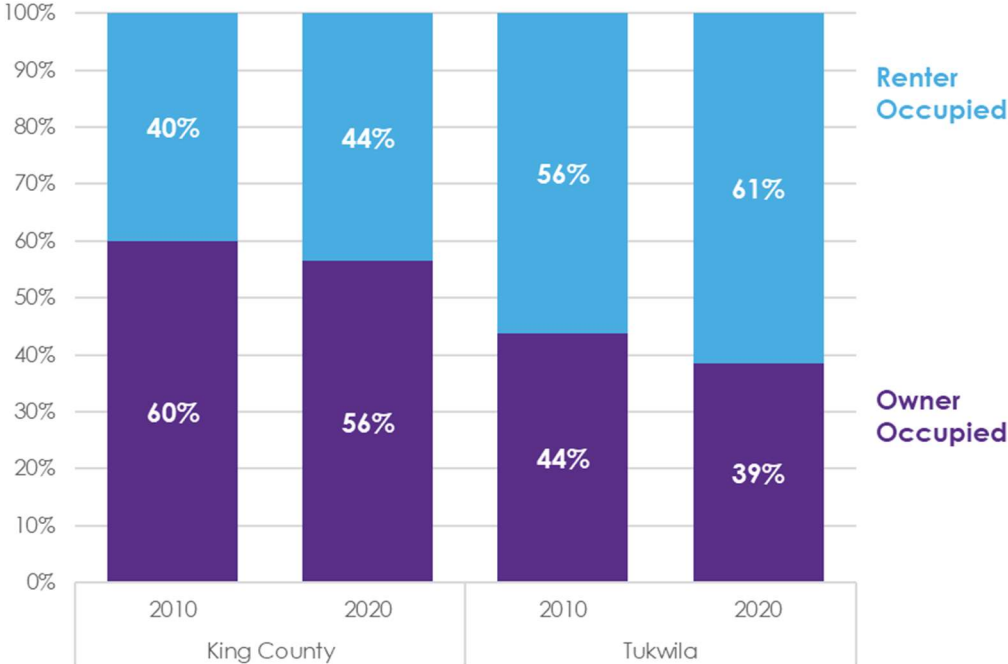


Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

**Exhibit 12** indicates that Tukwila’s share of renters has increased at a higher rate than King County as a whole over the last ten years. Renters made up over half (56%) of the housing in 2010 and this has increased to close to two thirds (61%) in 2020.



**Exhibit 12. Housing by Tenure, Tukwila and King County, 2010 and 2020**



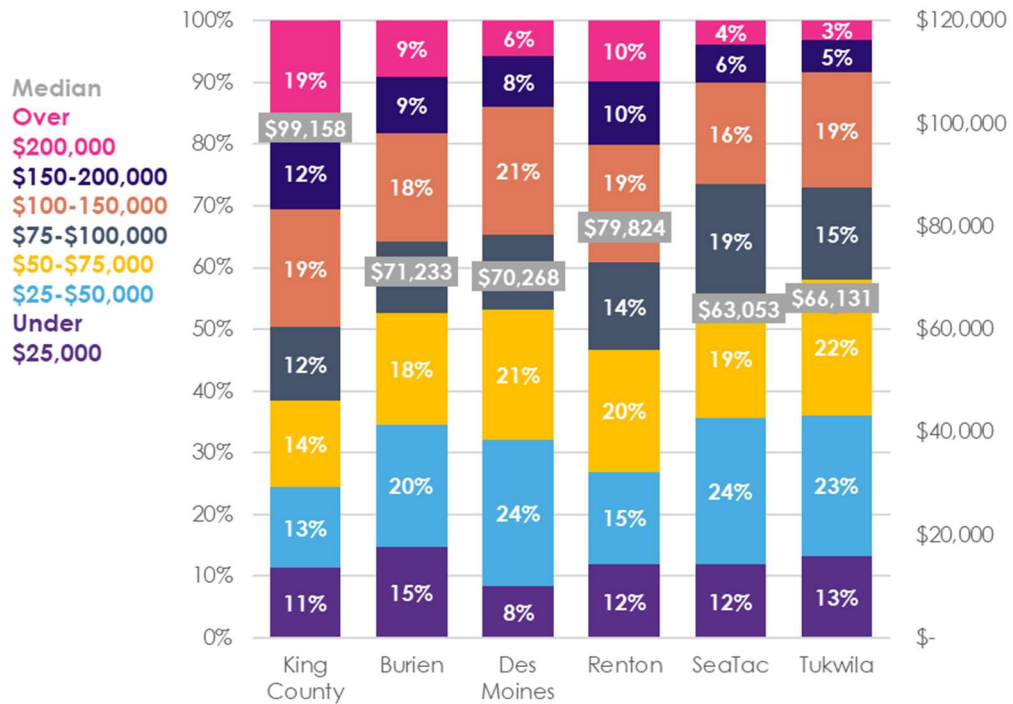
Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2016-2020; CAI, 2022.

Household Incomes and Expenses

***The 2020 median household income in Tukwila (\$66,131) was significantly lower than King County (\$99,158) and most comparison cities, and over one third of Tukwila’s households earn less than \$40,000***

The 2020 median household income in Tukwila (\$66,131) was significantly lower than King County (\$99,158) and most comparison cities (**Exhibit 13**). SeaTac is the only comparison jurisdiction with a lower median household income (\$63,053). Tukwila has the lowest share of high-income earners (27% earn over \$100,000 and only 8% of the population earns over \$150,000). Over one third of Tukwila and SeaTac households earn under \$40,000.

**Exhibit 13. Median Household Income, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2020**

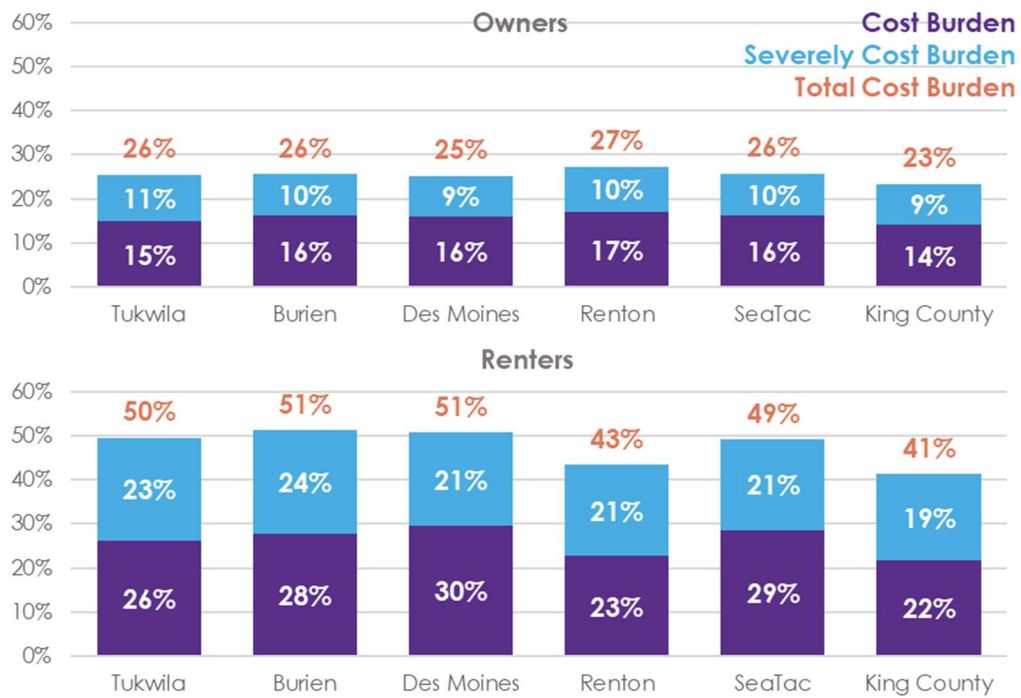


Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

*Almost half of Tukwila’s renters are either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened (49%) while the County has a lower share (41%)*

**Exhibit 14** summarizes the share of owners and renters that are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. Tukwila has a similar share of renters spending over 30% of their income on housing (50%) relative to many of comparison cities. However, this is a much larger share than the share of renters across King County (41%). Across all jurisdictions, owners are less likely to be cost burdened. About one-quarter (26%) of Tukwila’s owner-occupied households are cost burdened, which is comparable relative to comparison cities. King County as a whole has a slightly lower share of cost burdened owners than the selected comparison jurisdictions (23%).

**Exhibit 14. Share of Cost Burdened Owners and Renters, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2015-2019**

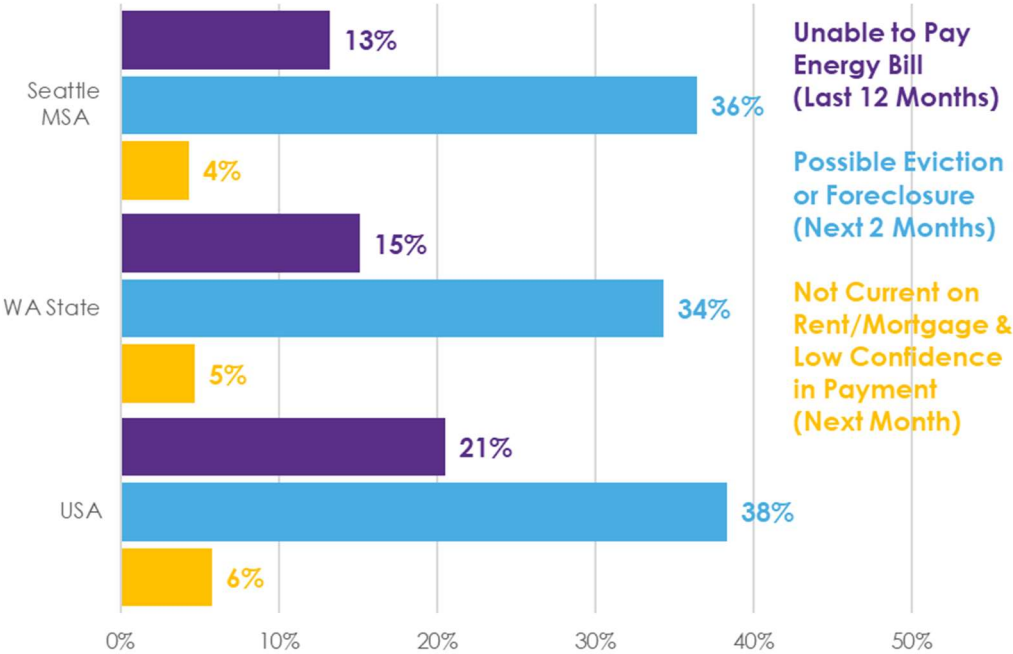


Source: HUD CHAS, 2015-2019; CAI, 2022.

***Over one-third of surveyed households in the Seattle MSA indicated they could face possible eviction or foreclosure in the next two months***

The most recent ACS Household Pulse Survey of households in Washington State and the Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area sought to identify an estimate of households facing possible eviction or foreclosure as well as challenges keeping up with rent and mortgage payments and energy bills. Although this information was not collected at the city level, it can inform how Tukwila addresses policies related to housing insecurity. As of April-May 2022, one third of those surveyed in the Seattle MSA indicated they could face possible eviction or foreclosure in the next two months, 13% may be unable to pay their energy bills, and 4% are not current and face low confidence in their ability to pay rent or mortgage payments in the next month (**Exhibit 15**).

**Exhibit 15. Housing and Bill Payment Insecurity Perception, US, WA State, Seattle MSA, April-May 2022**



Source: ACS Household Pulse Survey, 2022; CAI, 2022.

**ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

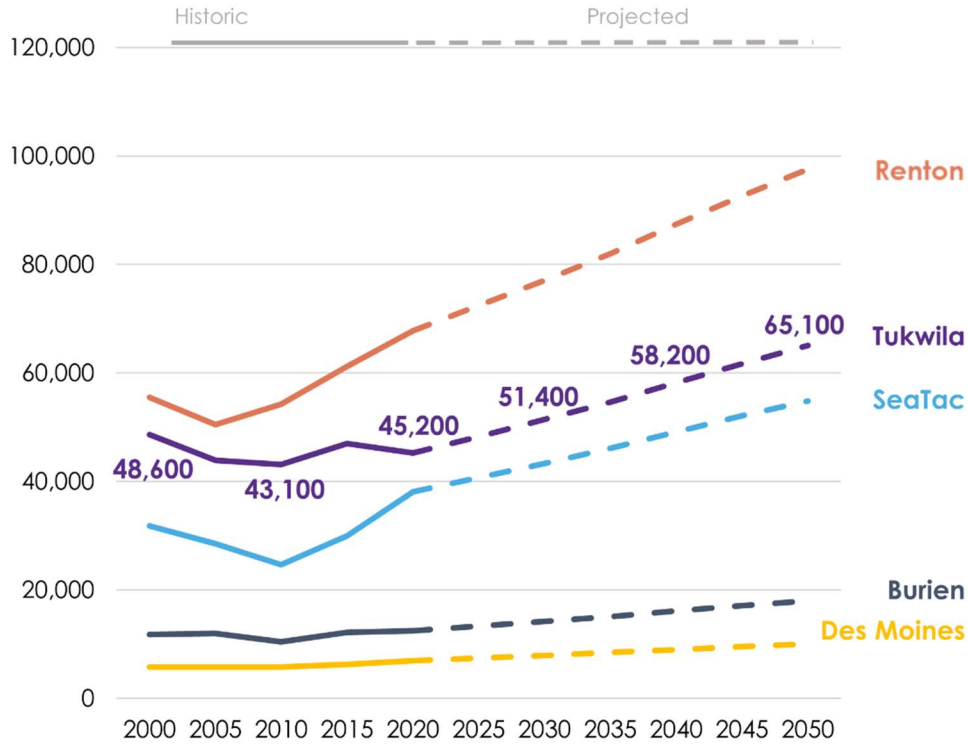
Economic indicators include total and industry-specific employment, cost of living, and industry dynamics. Building an understanding of these economic indicators can help frame how the City of Tukwila will approach business attraction and other economic development activities.

**Employment**

*Tukwila could add more than 20,000 jobs by 2050 if it maintains its share of regional employment, but a decline at the same rate as 2015 to 2020 would result in 9,000 fewer jobs by 2050*

As of 2020, there were an estimated 45,180 jobs located in Tukwila. If the City were to maintain its share of future employment growth in the region, as depicted in **Exhibit 16**, Tukwila would add 20,000 jobs by 2050. Historically, employment in Tukwila declined at a similar rate as comparison cities from 2000 to 2010. It grew at a slower rate than comparison cities from 2010-2015 and there was another decline in jobs from 2015 to 2020.

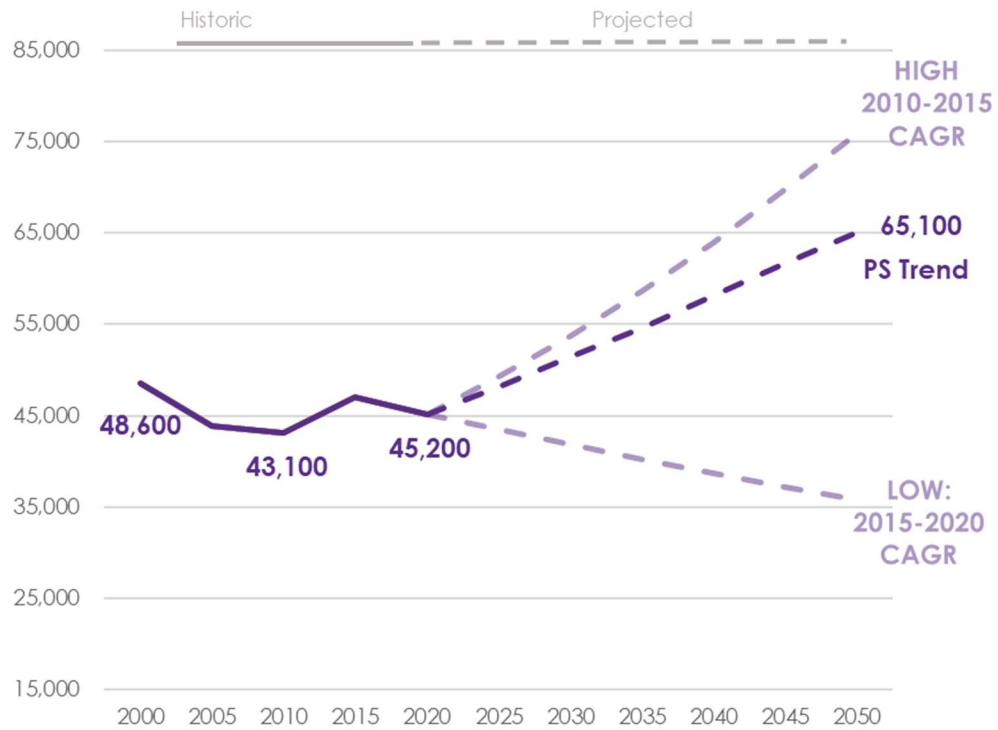
**Exhibit 16. Historic (2000 to 2021) and Forecast Employment (Regional Trend), Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2000 – 2040**



Source: PSRC 2021; CAI, 2022.

**Exhibit 17** contains additional scenarios for employment growth in Tukwila. While Tukwila experienced moderate job growth from 2010 to 2015, employment levels declined by an average annual rate of -0.8% from 2015 to 2020. If the trend from the last five years is extended out to 2050, the city would lose over 9,000 jobs (the “low” CAGR in **Exhibit 17**). If it maintains its current share of the region’s employment (2%, as in **Exhibit 16** and as labelled “PS Trend” in **Exhibit 17**), Tukwila will have 65,000 jobs by 2050, adding close to 20,000 jobs. If the City grows at the rate it grew from 2010 to 2015 (1.7% average annual growth, the “high” CAGR in **Exhibit 17**), it could add as many as 30,000 jobs by 2050.

**Exhibit 17. Historical and Forecast Employment Growth Scenarios, Tukwila 2000 – 2040**

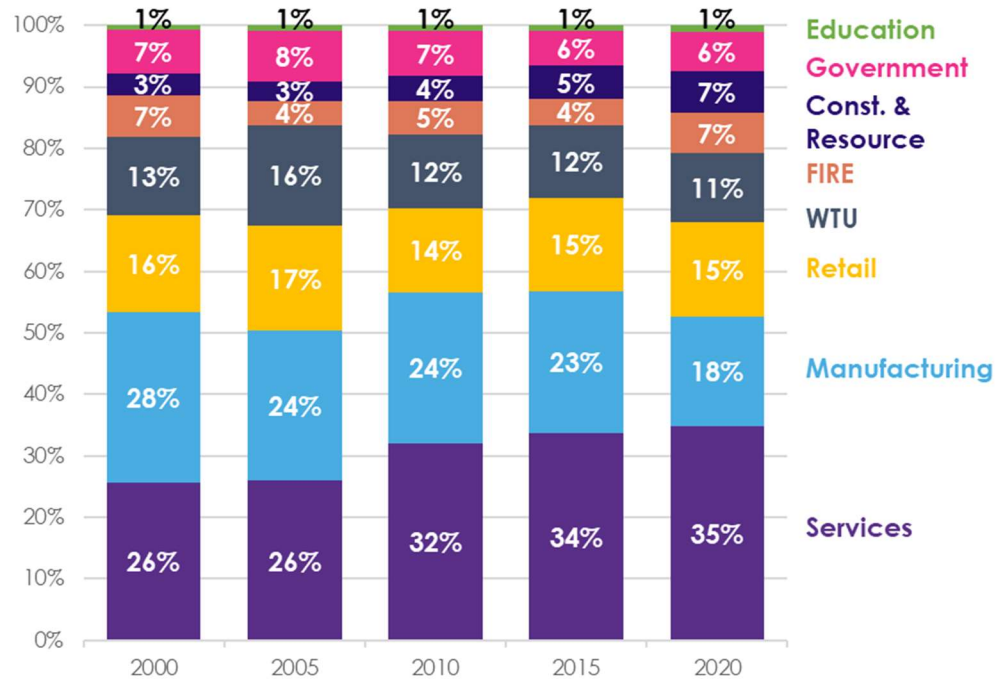


Source: PSRC 2021; CAI, 2022.

***The largest share of Tukwila’s jobs is in Services (35%), Manufacturing (18%), and Retail (15%) industries***

**Exhibit 18** summarizes the share of jobs associated with major employment sectors in Tukwila. As of 2020, the Services industry represented over one third of Tukwila’s employment and its share of the economy has grown significantly over the last 20 years. Manufacturing currently makes up close to one fifth of Tukwila’s employment (18%), but it represents a much lower share of the city jobs than it did in 2000 (28%). Retail jobs have maintained a relatively consistent share of the employment (ranging from 14-17% since 2000). Warehouse, Transportation, and Utilities (WTU) job share has ranged from 16% in 2000 to 11% in 2020. The job share is lower for FIRE, Construction and Resource, Government, and Education.

**Exhibit 18. Employment by Sector, Tukwila, 2000-2020**

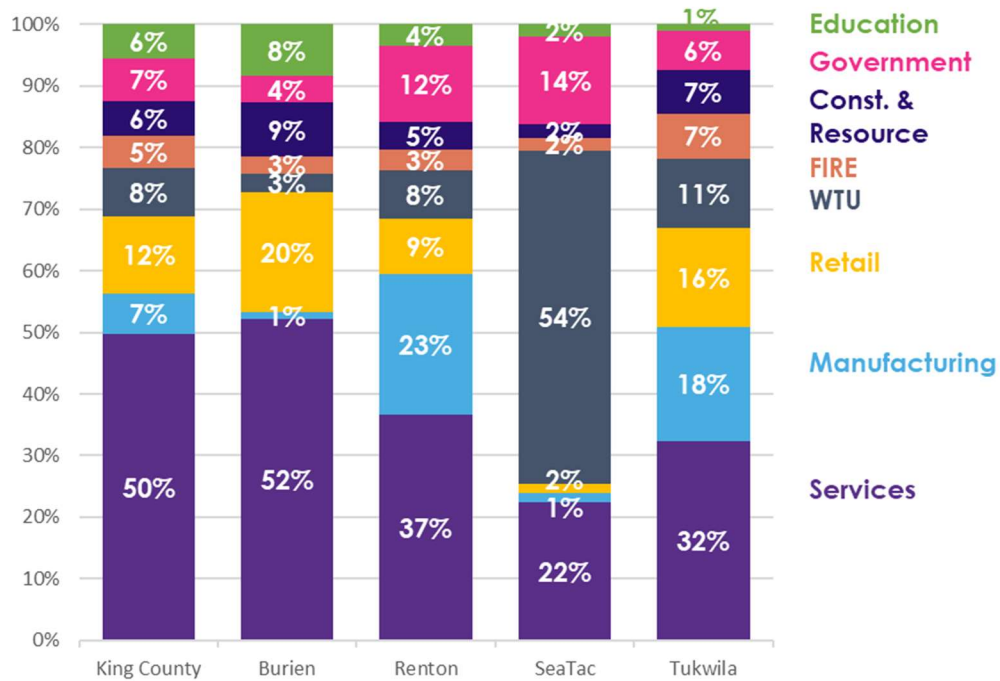


Source: PSRC 2021; CAI, 2022.

***Tukwila has a lower share of jobs in the Services sector and a higher share in Manufacturing and Retail relative to King County***

**Exhibit 19** contains a comparison of job share by industry among Tukwila’s comparison cities and King County. King County has a larger share of jobs in the Services sector (50%) and fewer jobs in manufacturing (7%) and WTU (8%). Burien also has a larger share of Services jobs (52%) as well as Retail jobs (20%). Renton resembles Tukwila’s job share, but it has a slightly larger share in Services (37%) and a much larger share in Manufacturing (23%). Over half of the jobs in SeaTac are in Warehouse, Transportation, and Utilities (54%), likely impacted given the proximity of SeaTac International Airport.

**Exhibit 19. Employment by Sector, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2021**



Source: PSRC 2021; CAI, 2022.

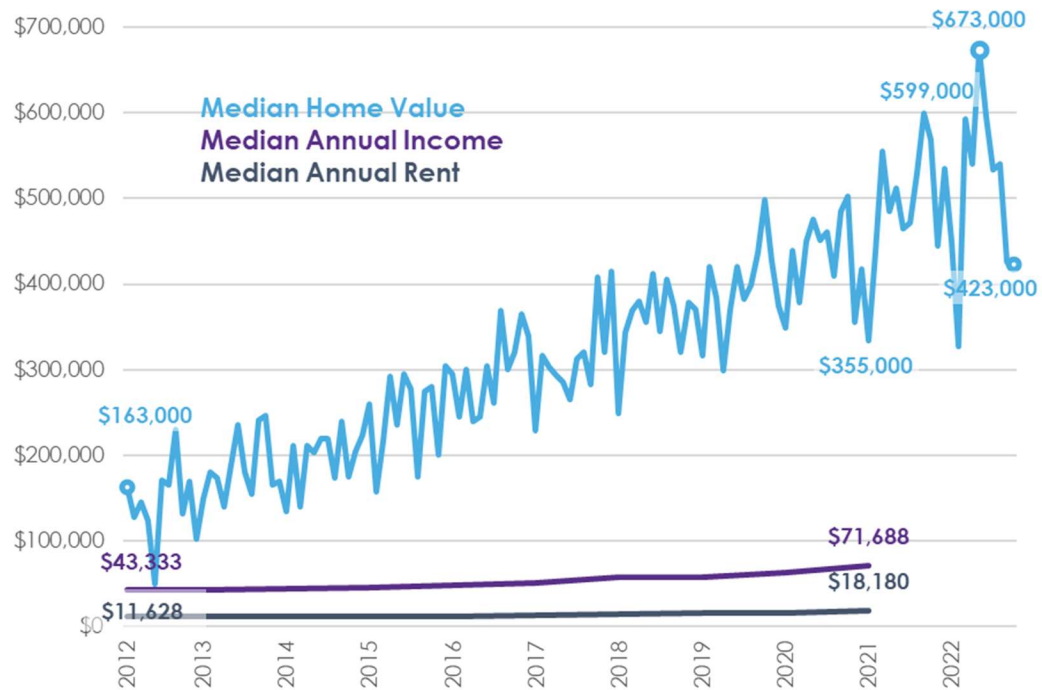
## Cost of Living

*While the rise in median incomes have largely kept pace with increasing rents, homeownership is becoming more unattainable, and rents remain high for those on a limited income*

**Exhibit 20** highlights the gap between incomes and rents and housing costs in Tukwila from 2012 to 2022. The median home value in Tukwila, based on sales data from Redfin, increased from \$163,000 in early 2012 to \$599,000 in late 2021, a 267% total increase. By annual average, home values increased at a higher rate in Tukwila compared to the county, with an CAGR of 14.3% from 2012-2022 compared to King County’s 9.6%. Median annual rent went from \$11,600 in 2012 to \$18,200 in 2021, a 57% increase. During this same period, median incomes went from \$43,300 to \$71,688, an increase of 66%. Median incomes have largely kept pace with rising rents, but house prices increased more rapidly, and homeownership is becoming increasingly unattainable. Additionally, the rise in rents is likely to have a higher impact in Tukwila due to the high share of households earning less than \$40,000 (**Exhibit 13**).



## Exhibit 20. Housing Costs and Income Change, Tukwila, 2012 to 2022



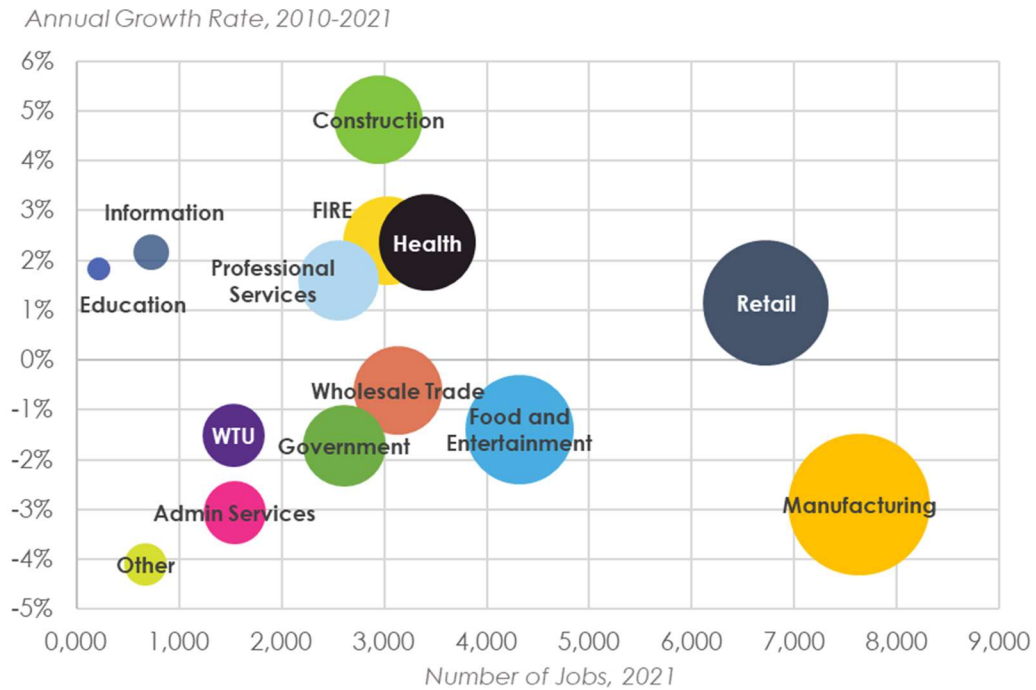
Source: Redfin, 2022; ACS, 2010-2021; CAI, 2022.

## Industries and Firms

*Tukwila's highest growth industries are Construction followed by FIRE, Health, and Information; Retail and Manufacturing continue to have many jobs, but Retail growth is slower, and Manufacturing has had job losses since 2010*

**Exhibit 21** charts the size and growth rate of different industries in Tukwila since 2010. The fastest growing industry with a significant number of jobs is Construction followed by Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE), Health, and Professional Services. Information and Education industries have a limited number of jobs, but they are growing at a similar rate to FIRE and Health. Retail has maintained a reasonable growth rate and continues to have many jobs. Manufacturing continues to hold a high number of the jobs, but it has been in decline alongside Administrative Services and Other industries with smaller jobs numbers. Food and Entertainment, Warehousing, Transportation, and Utilities (WTU), Wholesale Trade, and Government also have had job losses since 2010.

**Exhibit 21. Industry Size and Annual Growth Rate, Tukwila, 2010-2021**

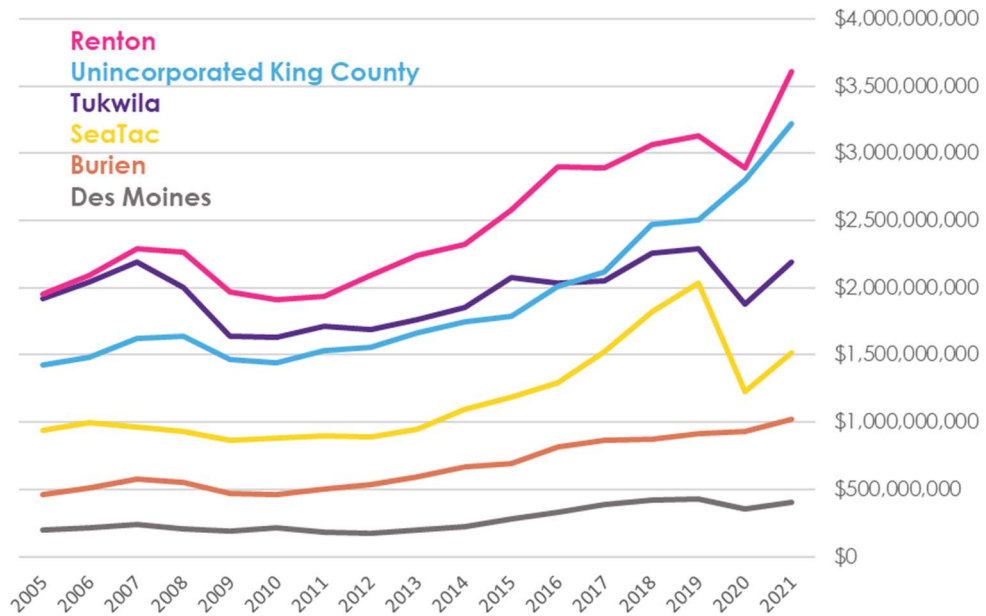


Source: PSRC, 2010-2021; CAI, 2022.

*Tukwila has consistently had higher taxable retail sales than comparison cities, it faced significant declines from 2019 to 2020, and it has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels*

**Exhibit 22** indicates the annual taxable retail sales among Tukwila, comparison cities, and unincorporated King County. In 2005, Tukwila had \$1.9 billion in taxable retail sales and increased to just under \$2.2 billion prior to the 2008 recession. After a low of \$1.63 billion in 2010, sales slowly increased through to 2015, leveled off through 2017, and again increased to a high of almost \$2.3 billion in 2019. The economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic led to a decline in retail sales at a low of \$1.9 billion in 2020. As of 2021 Tukwila’s taxable retail sales were \$2.2 billion, representing a rapid recovery to just under pre-pandemic levels. Except for Renton, Tukwila has consistently had taxable retail sales above comparison cities. It has faced more sharp increases and decreases relative to the slow, steady growth in Burien and Des Moines. Retail sales trends are like Renton, but Renton had more significant growth post-2009 recession and increased more significantly post-pandemic. Recent sales trends are similar to, but greater than, adjacent SeaTac’s. Given rapid inflation in recent years, sales tax receipts for Tukwila may be less impactful in terms of city revenue.

**Exhibit 22. Total Taxable Retail Sales, Tukwila & Comparison Cities, 2005-2021**



Source: Department of Revenue, 2022; CAI, 2022.

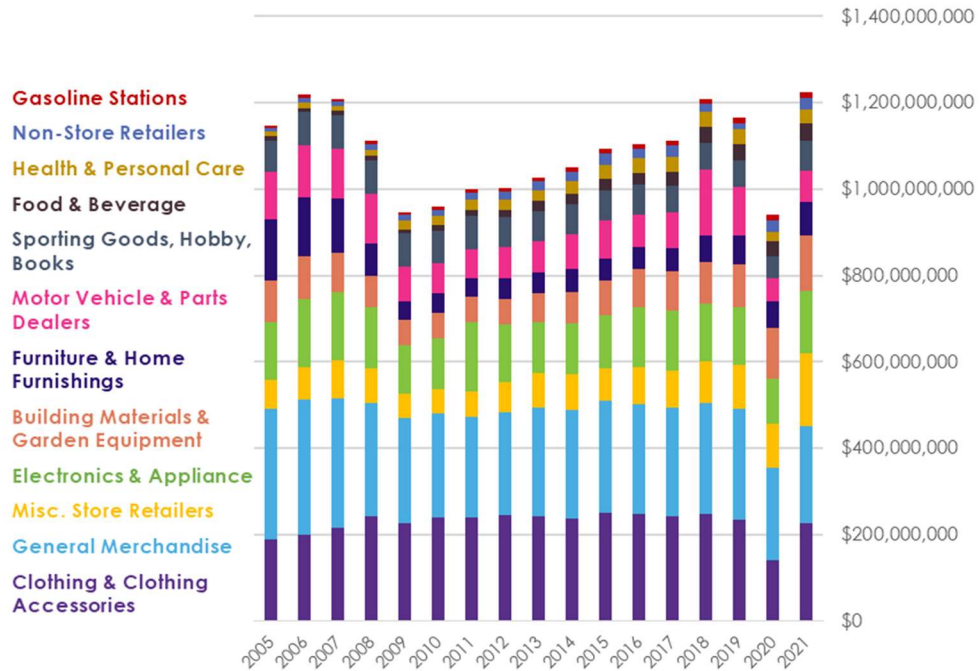
*The largest share of retail sales in Tukwila are in the Clothing and Clothing Accessories (\$226 million), which faced steep declines in 2020 and has not yet fully recovered.*

**Exhibit 23** charts the retail sales across different consumer categories for the City of Tukwila. The largest share of retail sales is Clothing and Clothing Accessories (\$226 million) followed by General Merchandise (\$224 million), Miscellaneous Store Retailers (\$170 million), Electronics and Appliances (\$145 million), and Building Material and Garden Equipment (\$127 million). There are also significant sales in Furniture & Home Furnishings (\$77 million), Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers (\$74 million), and Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books (\$69 million). Food and Beverage (\$40 million), Health and Personal Care (\$34 million) also have significant sales in Tukwila, while Non-store Retailers that include E-Commerce (\$25 million) and Gas Stations (\$14 million) have the smallest share of Tukwila’s retail sales.

Tukwila’s retail sales declined significantly in connection with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The most significant decline in sales occurred in Clothing and Clothing Accessories (-\$96 million), Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers (-\$60 million), and General Merchandise (-\$40 million) and these categories have not yet fully recovered. Remaining recovery in retail sales is most significant for Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers and General

Merchandise, while Clothing and Clothing Accessories has had closer to a full recovery. There were no losses in Building Material and Garden Equipment, Non-store Retailers, and Gasoline Stations and the losses in all other categories recovered to pre-pandemic sales levels in 2021.

**Exhibit 23. Retail Sales per Category, Tukwila, 2005-2021**

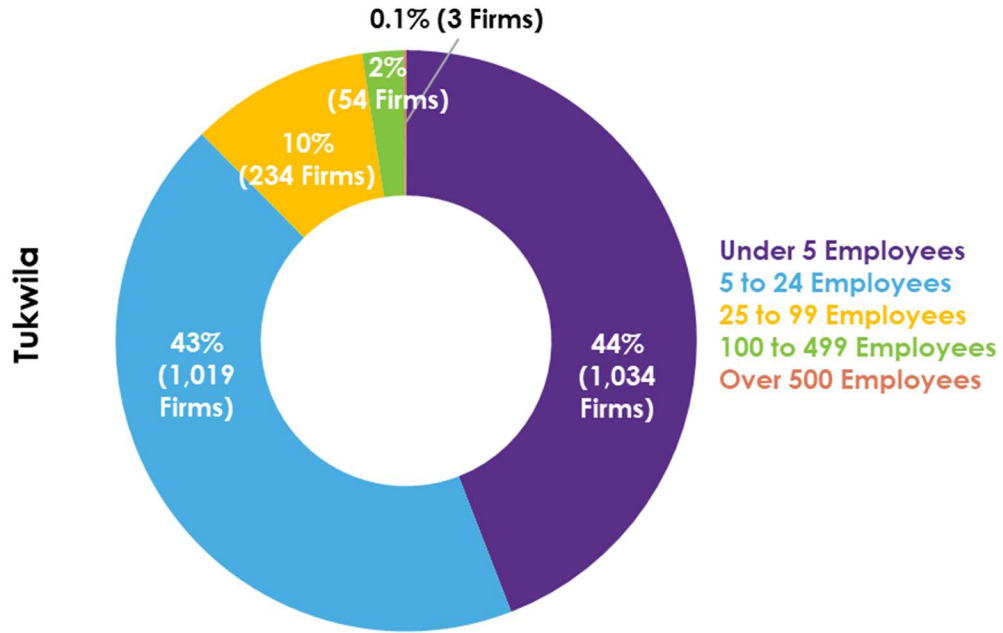


*Source: Department of Revenue, 2022; CAI, 2022. Total value of retail sales by consumer categories in Exhibit 22 varies from the total taxable retail sales in Exhibit 21 since this data source only summarizes a subset for stores in Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45).*

***Around 87% of Tukwila’s businesses have less than 25 employees and an average firm size of 15 employees.***

**Exhibit 24** summarizes the share of firms by number of employees. Around 87% of Tukwila’s firms have less than 25 employees and an average firm size of 15 employees. There are very few establishments with over 500 employees and firms with over 100 employees only make up a little over 2% of businesses in the city.

**Exhibit 24. Firm Numbers and Size, Tukwila and County, 2021**

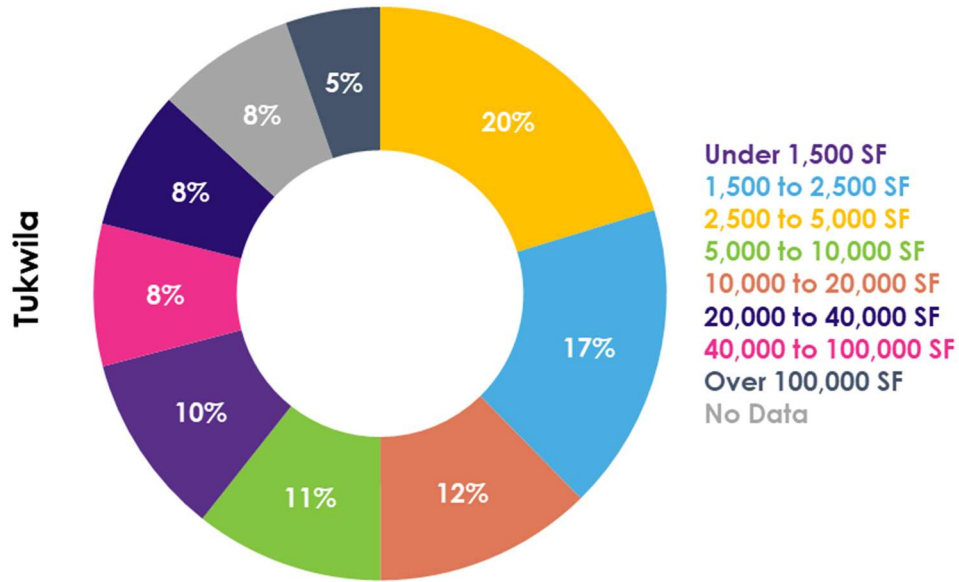


Source: Esri/DataAxle, 2021; ACS, 2021; CAI, 2022.

*Almost half of the businesses in Tukwila rely on less than 10,000 square feet and over one third use less than 5,000 square feet of commercial space.*

**Exhibit 25** summarizes the share of firms by square footage of commercial space in Tukwila. Over one third of businesses use less than 5,000 square feet (37%) and almost half use less than 10,000 square feet (48%). A little over one quarter use 10,000 to 100,000 square feet (28%) and only 5% of businesses use over 100,000 square feet.

**Exhibit 25. Share of Firms by Square Footage, Tukwila, 2021**

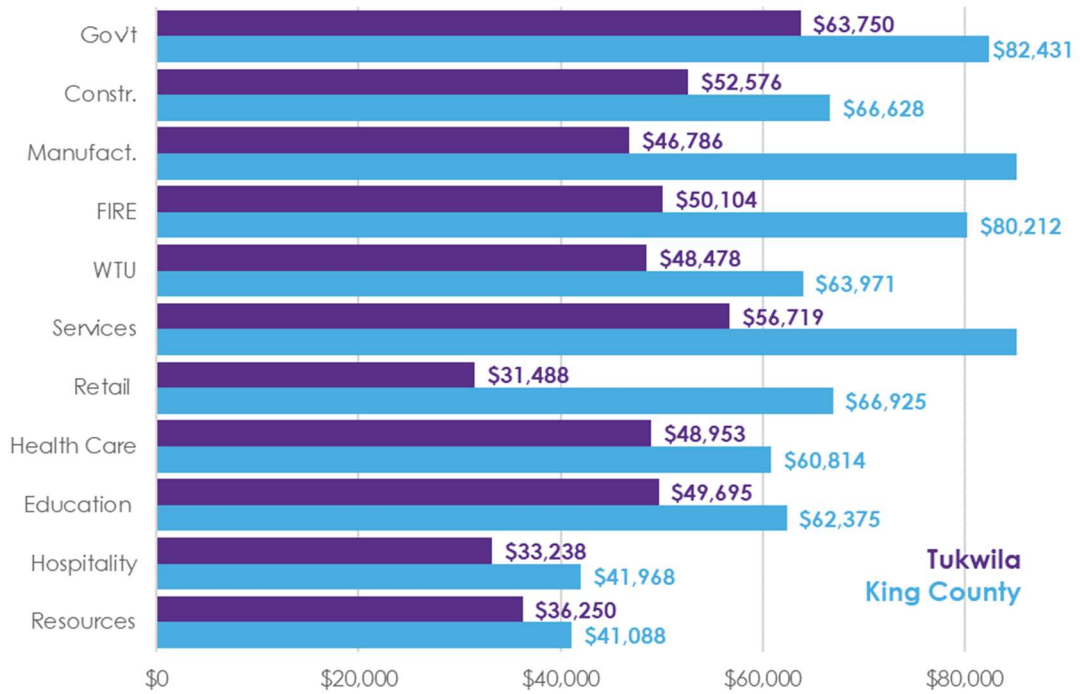


Source: Esri/DataAxle (2021), ACS

***Median wages are lower in Tukwila than King County across all industries, but the higher wage industries for Tukwila are Government, Services, and Construction***

Tukwila’s high wage industries are in Government (\$63,750) and Services (\$56,719) and its low wage industries are in Retail (\$31,488), Hospitality (\$33,238), and Resources (\$36,250) (**Exhibit 26**). Average wages range around \$45,000 to \$50,000 for the remaining industries. Median wages are less than King County across all industries, and the difference in wage levels between the City and County is most prominent in Retail, Manufacturing, FIRE, Services, and Retail.

**Exhibit 26. Average Median Wage by Industry, Tukwila and King County, 2020**



Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

## WORKFORCE INDICATORS

Workforce indicators include occupational characteristics and capacities. This section focuses on job numbers and industries of workers who live in Tukwila. A portion of these jobs employ workers that live and work in the city, but data in this section will also refer to jobs across the region and state held by Tukwila residents.

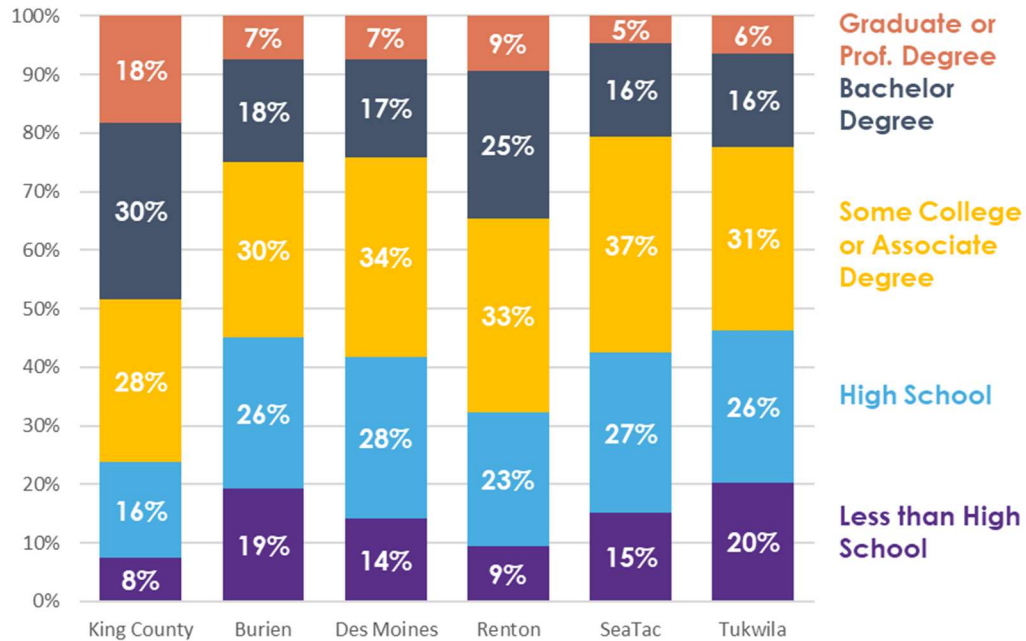
### Occupational Characteristics

*Tukwila’s residents have limited education levels relative to King County and comparison cities with one fifth without High School education (20%) and less than one quarter (22%) with a bachelor’s degree or above*

One fifth (20%) of Tukwila’s population over 18-years-old have less than a High School education, while the share in King County is 8% and Tukwila’s comparison cities also have a lower share than the City (**Exhibit 27**). Similar to all comparison cities other than Renton, around one quarter of Tukwila’s population has a High School education or above (26%), close to one third

have Some College (31%), around one sixth have a Bachelor’s Degree (16%), and only a small share have a Graduate or Professional Degree (6%). Close to half of King County has a Bachelor’s or above, while this is 22% for Tukwila and ranges from 21% to 34% among comparison cities.

**Exhibit 27. Educational Attainment, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2020**

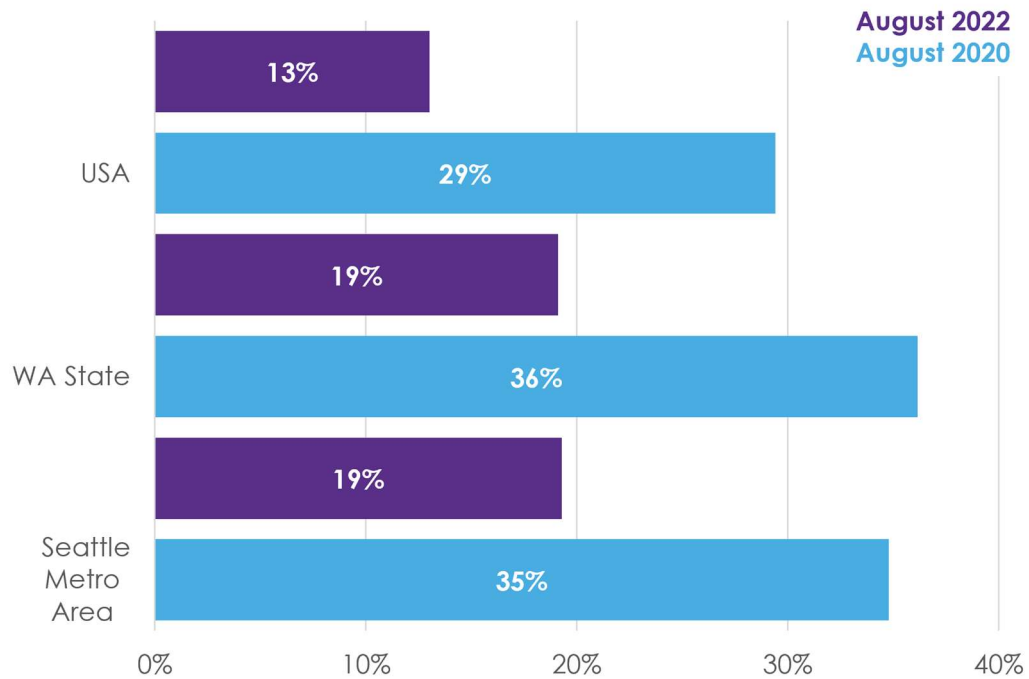


Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

ACS Household Pulse Surveys of households the US, in Washington State, and in the Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area sought to identify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people’s educational pursuits. Although this information was not collected at the city level, it may inform how Tukwila addresses policies related to access to higher education and job training. In August 2020, at the height of the pandemic, 35% of those surveyed in the Seattle Metro area indicated that they cancelled their pursuit of post-secondary education (**Exhibit 28**). Large proportions of these cancellations were driven by health concerns over the Coronavirus, economic challenges related to the pandemic, and / or changes to institutions as a result of the pandemic. In comparison, 21% of those surveyed in the Seattle Metro area indicated their plans for pursuing higher education had not changed, while the remainder reported different changes to their education plans, such as taking fewer classes, switching institutions, or taking classes in different formats. In 2022, the number of people who cancelled their pursuit of post-secondary education in the Seattle Metro region dropped to 19% while the number of those with unchanged plans rose to 43%, signaling a significant, if temporary, realignment of education patterns in the region.



**Exhibit 28. Cancelled Pursuit of Post-Secondary Education, USA, WA State, Seattle MSA, August 2020 and August 2022**

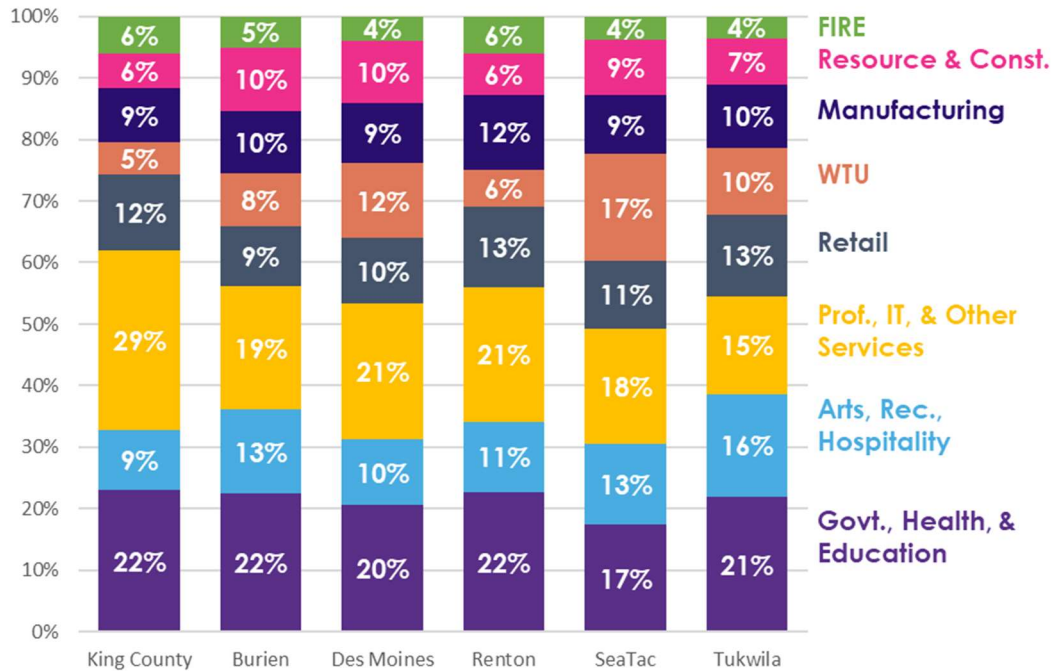


Source: ACS Household Pulse Survey, August 2020 and March 2021; CAI, 2022.

***Tukwila residents work in a wide range of industry sectors, and the largest share are employed in Government, Health and Education (21%)***

**Exhibit 29** indicates that Tukwila residents are employed by a wide range of industry sectors rather than a set of one or two dominant industries. The largest share work in Government, Health, and Education (21%); Arts, Recreation, and Hospitality (16%); Professional, IT, and Other Services (15%); and Retail (13%). The smallest share of residents is employed in FIRE (4%), Resource and Construction (7%), as well as an equal share between Manufacturing (10%) and WTU (10%).

**Exhibit 29. Resident Job Share by Industry, Tukwila and Comparison Cities, 2020**



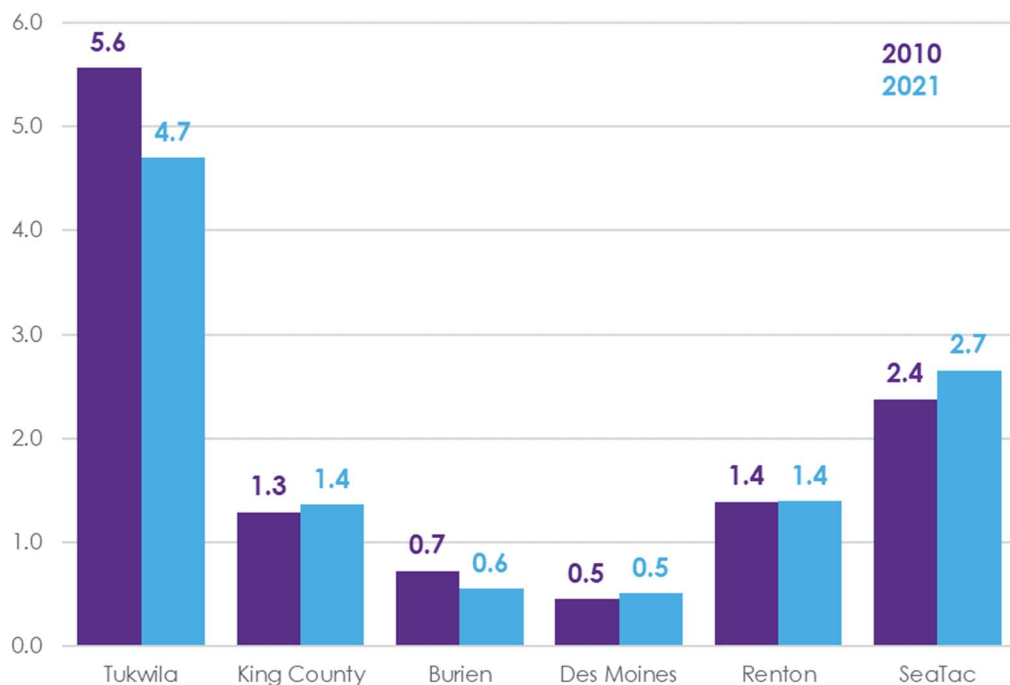
Source: ACS, 2020; CAI, 2022.

## Laborshed and Commutedshed

*Tukwila has over four times the number of jobs to residents despite the addition of 1,084 units since 2010*

**Exhibit 30** provides a clear indication that Tukwila has a heightened level of employment relative to housing (4.7 jobs-to-housing ratio) compared to both King County (1.4) and comparison cities that have jobs-to-housing ratios ranging from 0.5 in Des Moines to 2.7 in SeaTac. This is despite 1,084 housing units added to the city since 2010.

**Exhibit 30. Jobs-to-Housing Units Ratio, Tukwila and Comparison Jurisdictions, 2010 & 2021**

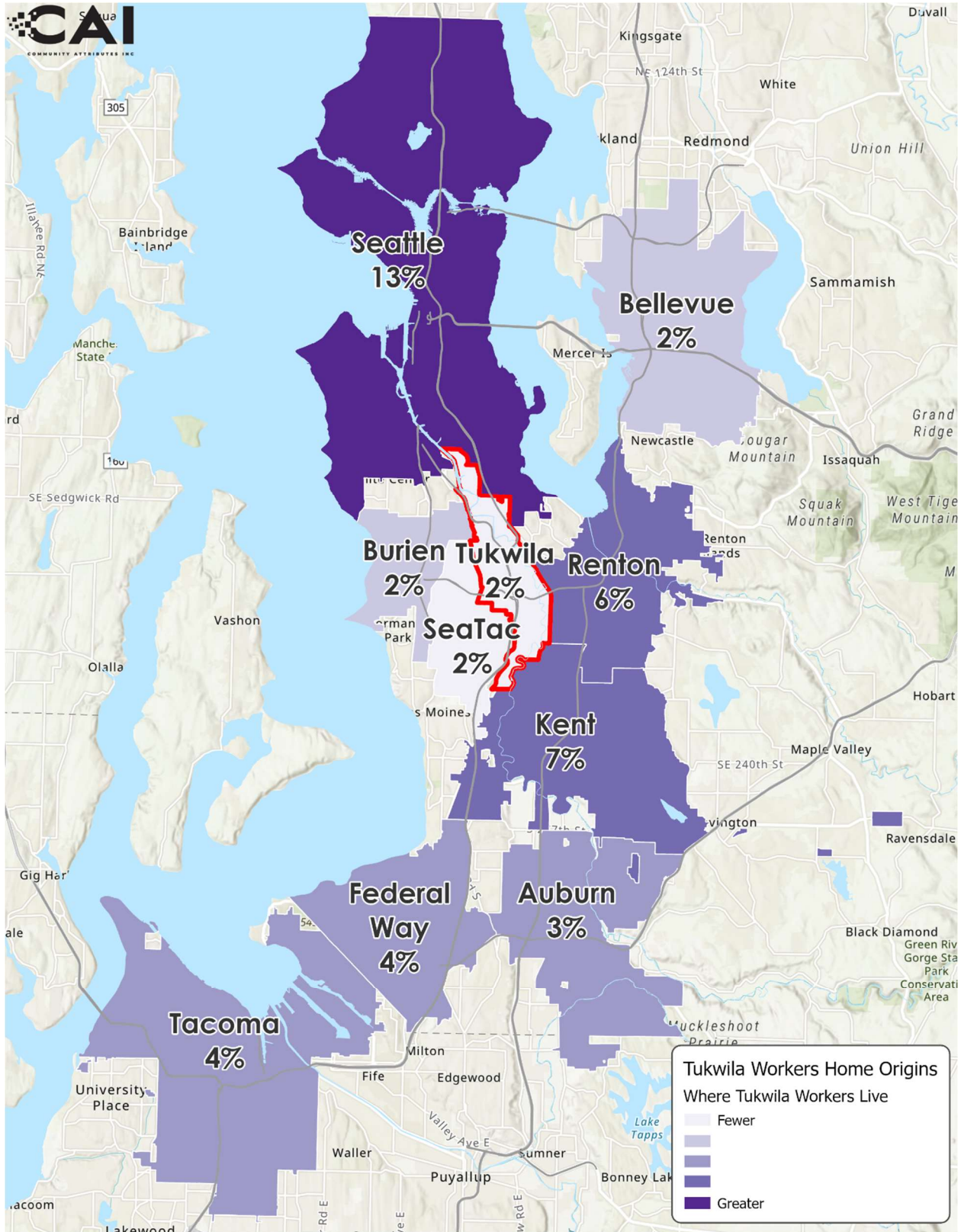


Source: PSRC, 2010 and 2021 (jobs); OFM, 2010 and 2021 (housing units); CAI, 2022.

*The largest share of workers in Tukwila jobs reside in, and commute from, Seattle, while only 2% of workers in Tukwila jobs also live in Tukwila. About 15% of workers commute from cities immediately adjacent to Tukwila.*

**Exhibit 31** maps out where those that work in Tukwila live. A very small portion of Tukwila’s workforce is drawn from residents within the city (1.7%) and the largest share of its workers commute from Seattle (12.9%). Around 15% commute in from adjacent cities, including Kent (7.1%), Renton (5.8%), and a limited share from Burien (2.3%) and SeaTac (1.7%). Around 14% commute in from areas that are a further distance from Tukwila, including Tacoma (3.9%), Federal Way (4%), Auburn (3.4%), and Bellevue (2.3%).

**Exhibit 31. Location of Residence Among Tukwila Workers, 2020**

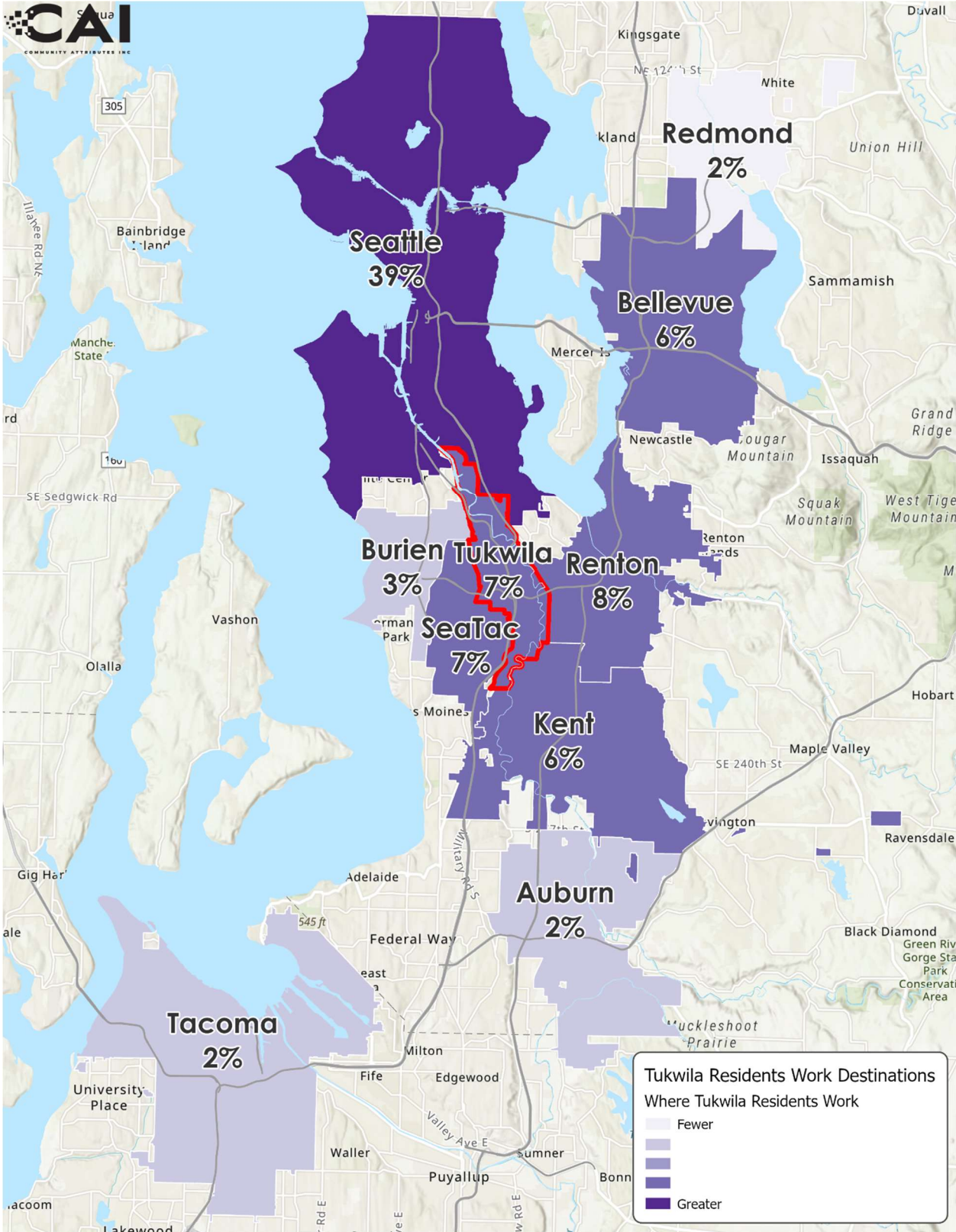


Source: U.S. Census LEHD, 2020; CAI, 2023.

*A large share of Tukwila’s working residents commute to Seattle (39%) and other adjacent cities (26%) for work, while 7% work in the city*

**Exhibit 32** maps out where those that live in Tukwila and work. Around 7% of Tukwila’s workforce residents work within the city, while over one third commute to Seattle (39%). Just under one quarter commute to adjacent cities for work (26.1%), including Renton (7.5%), SeaTac (6.7%), Bellevue (6.2%), as well as Kent (5.7%). A limited share of workers commutes to adjacent Burien (2.7%) and more distant areas such as Auburn (2%), Tacoma (2%), and Redmond (1.6%)

**Exhibit 32. Location of Work Among Tukwila Residents, 2020**



Source: U.S. Census LEHD, 2020; CAI, 2023.

## SMART CITIES LITERATURE REVIEW

Smart City initiatives, competitions, and policies look for ways cities can leverage information and communication technologies to address urban challenges, optimize city functions, promote economic growth, and improve resident quality of life.<sup>2</sup> In economic development, smart cities consider how these technologies, the Internet of Things (IoT), software, sensors, networks, data, and etc., can be applied towards expanding economic opportunities for citizens and making communities more resilient.<sup>3</sup>

The fundamental connection between infrastructure, technology, and economic development in cities is illustrated by the US Economic Development Administration's Smart City- focused i6 Challenge, now dubbed the Build to Scale Program.<sup>4</sup> Submissions find technological approaches to advance the EDA's investment priorities, including **equity**, recovery and resilience, workforce development, manufacturing, technology-based economic development, environmentally sustainable development, and exports and foreign direct investment.<sup>5</sup> The US Department of Transportation's own Smart Cities Challenge, launched in 2015, highlights practical solutions, such as technology applied to support more affordable and sustainable mobility choices, to promote freight efficiency, to monitor air pollution and identify emission hot spots, to connect underserved communities to job centers, to monitor power consumption and explore alternative energy sources, and to bridge the digital divide.<sup>6</sup> Some specific examples of smart city projects include;

- smart parking that helps drivers find a parking space and allows for digital payment
- smart traffic management that monitors traffic flow and optimizes traffic lights to reduce congestion
- ride-sharing services that are managed by a smart city infrastructure
- smart grid technologies that manage maintenance and planning for power supplies
- streetlights that dim when the roads are empty
- internet-enabled waste collection and fleet management systems

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<sup>2</sup> • National Geographic, "Smart Cities". Link:

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/smart-cities/>

<sup>3</sup> Nick Maynard (2020) Smart City Technologies: Driving Economic Growth and Community Resilience. Day One Project, Federation of American Scientists.

<sup>4</sup> US Economic Development Administration (2023) Investment Priorities, US Department of Commerce ([Investment Priorities | U.S. Economic Development Administration \(eda.gov\)](https://www.eda.gov/investment-priorities))

<sup>5</sup> US Economic Development Administration (2023) Regional Innovation Strategies Program i6 Challenge (now Build to Scale Program), US Department of Commerce

<sup>6</sup> US Department of Transportation (2016). Smart City Challenge Lessons Learned.

- Sensors that enable early warning for incidents like floods, landslides, hurricanes or droughts
- Monitoring areas of high crime
- A notification system that allows citizens to tell officials of any problems, such as potholes
- Sensors that monitor infrastructure problems such as leaks in water pipes
- Technology that improves the efficiency of manufacturing, urban farming, energy use

### **Best Practices Applicable to Tukwila**

Today, technology is embedded as an essential tool in solving economic development challenges as data-driven planning, technology-based economic development, and environmentally-sustainable development become priorities nationwide.<sup>7</sup> Exploring the role of technology in Tukwila’s economic development strategies, the best practices of smart cities applicable to Tukwila will follow, some of which the City is already doing

- Smart traffic flow management system, which can combine a central control system with controls for traffic lights and sensors for detecting delays or the amount of traffic at particular intersections. The control system can adjust the timing of the lights based on the amount of traffic and how well that traffic is flowing. Some systems can adjust timing, for example, for buses or emergency vehicles as well.
- Smart toll roads may also be provisioned. For example, sensors may be installed that detect when a car passes a toll plaza and deduct the toll from a user account. In addition, a variable toll may be assessed based on traffic conditions. For example, express toll lanes may be implemented that monitor traffic and charge a greater amount based on the amount of usage of the lane.
- Smart parking-meter network. Parking meters may, for example, be equipped with sensors or other monitors that communicate with a central server and a user app to advise when a parking spot is available and guide a driver to it. Such meters may be able to automatically charge a parker for using the spot and advise the user and, potentially, law enforcement when the meter time has expired.
- Smart electric meters, which are digital. Electric meters can be used to replace the old, mechanical meters that require personnel to “read” the meter once a month. They can provide more timely monitoring of a particular customer’s usage and communicate wirelessly, so that no one needs to enter a backyard. Smart meters may also allow the utility to identify a source of a power outage more rapidly. Control of the house’s electricity can be handled easily from a centralized

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<sup>7</sup> US Economic Development Administration (2023) Regional Innovation Strategies Program i6 Challenge (now Build to Scale Program), US Department of Commerce



location, without requiring a utility crew to go out to turn it on or off. Smart meters can also allow for differential rate provisioning. That is, a consumer can be charged more for higher usage during peak hours.

- Some utilities have proposed the use of microgrids. These are groups of interconnected loads and sources that typically connect to the wider grid but can also be disconnected to operate autonomously as an “island.” Such microgrids can function as backups if there is a failure in the larger grid, but also can operate more efficiently.
- Streetlights may come to be networked as part of the smart city. Some cities, for example, are replacing old streetlights with those using more efficient light-emitting diodes, or LEDs. These new streetlights can also support cameras and other sensors for monitoring crowds or high-traffic areas. Sensors can even be installed to monitor pollutants.
- Expanding access to the internet is an essential step to bridging the digital divide. Some programs focus on expanding broadband access, while others create dedicated spaces with public wifi. For example, public buses or bus stops which offer wifi to passengers.

## INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

Infrastructure is the base upon which economic growth is built. Efficient infrastructure is essential for the movement of goods, whether that be through freight, air, or rail. Thus, assessment of Tukwila’s infrastructure and plans for infrastructure improvement is an essential consideration when developing economic development strategies.

As part of the Soundside Region’s connected transportation infrastructure, supply chains, workforce, and businesses, Tukwila offers many locational advantages. These include the Sea-Tac International Airport, Sounder commuter rail, and Link light rail as well as several notable anchor employers, such as the airport, Westfield Southcenter mall, downtown Seattle hotels, and Boeing work sites.<sup>8</sup> Tukwila not only offers strong vehicular connections through routes like the I-5, I-405, and State Route 518, but it has invested in transit and rail infrastructure, evidenced through spaces such as the Tukwila Urban Center (TUC), a central transit hub that is also envisioned as a thriving mixed use center, Tukwila International Boulevard Station (TIBS), a key light rail station on the route connecting the airport to Downtown Seattle, and Tukwila Station, the new multi-modal transit hub that includes commuter rail, a bus transit center with transfer plaza, paratransit, a bus layover area, and amenities for cyclists and pedestrians<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Soundside Alliance for Economic Development (2023) Key Industries, Link: [Southwest King County Soundside Region Key Industries \(soundsidealliance.org\)](https://www.soundsidealliance.org/)

<sup>9</sup> City of Tukwila (2016) Tukwila Transit Plan Update

Tukwila’s 2023-2028 Financial Planning Model and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) addresses current and anticipated infrastructure deficiencies in the city and region.<sup>10</sup> Its Vision for Tukwila is the city of opportunity, the community of choice. In strategic goals, the CIP outlines a community of inviting neighborhoods and vibrant business districts, a solid foundation for all Tukwila residents, a diverse and regionally competitive economy, a high performing and effective organization, and a positive community identity and image. The CIP further plans the city’s significant investments over the next six years. Examples of critical investments outlined include investments in utilities to upgrade facilities, ensure future water storage, enhance fish passage, and maintain levees, aligning with strategic plan goals, and street overlays, which continue to receive \$1.4 million per year to maintain a high pavement rating. The Allentown Truck Reroute project secures funding to identify alternative routes for trucks accessing the BNSF intermodal yard, thereby improving the quality of life in the Allentown neighborhood. Funding is allocated for the replacement of the 42nd Avenue Bridge, with anticipated completion by the end of 2025. Furthermore, the program includes the design and construction of Phase II of the Consolidated Shops facility, aimed at increasing the efficiency of public works functions. Various pedestrian and transportation safety-related improvements will be undertaken, including crosswalks, traffic calming measures, sidewalk installations, and signal projects. In the realm of parks, investments will focus on improving amenities, open spaces, and multipurpose trails, ensuring equitable access, and enhancing the overall quality of life for Tukwila residents.

Regional plans, including the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2050, the draft Sound Transit 3 plan, and King County’s Metro Connects play a crucial role in anticipated investments from state and federal governments. Vision 2050 envisions Tukwila as a significant focal point for infrastructural investment, given its status as an urban growth center and its northern designation as a manufacturing and industrial center.<sup>11</sup> The Sound Transit 3 plan proposes various improvements for South Sounder service.<sup>12</sup> Key improvements for Tukwila includes increasing frequency, capacity, and span of service, better transit connectivity around Tukwila Station, and expanded parking capacity. The plan also envisages the addition of a Boeing Access Road light rail station, serving an underserved area, fostering transit accessibility, and encouraging transit-oriented development. It also plans for station-area access improvements and introduces the I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, bridging regional east-west connections and providing seamless transit for commuters traveling to Bellevue, Lynnwood, and

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<sup>10</sup> 2023-2028 Financial Planning Model and Capital Improvement Program (2022). City of Tukwila, Washington. Link: [PW-Current-CIP.pdf \(tukwilawa.gov\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> PSRC (2020) Vision 2050: A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region

<sup>12</sup> Sount Transit (2016) Sound Transit 3: The Regional Transit System Plan for Central Puget Sound

intermediate stations. Metro Connects, the King County Metro Long-Range Plan, describes the Via to Transit (AKA Metro Flex) pilot program, an on-demand service connecting riders to and from transit hubs in southeast Seattle and Tukwila. It also outlines the 2025 and 2040 long-range system networks, offering improved frequencies and additional connections to destinations, including Sea-Tac Airport Station, providing enhanced accessibility and connections between Tukwila Transit Center, Tukwila Station, and downtown Renton.<sup>13</sup>

Tukwila’s robust infrastructure, coupled with regional infrastructure plans and investments underscore Tukwila's commitment to fostering economic growth and improving the overall quality of life for its residents and workforce.

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<sup>13</sup> King County (2021), Metro Connects, King County Metro Long-Range Plan

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A. Guiding Policies

#### Greater Seattle Partner's Framework

Relevant strategies that can inform Tukwila's Strategy include:

- Inclusive Economy strategies tied to BIPOC, immigrant communities, and women can help in elevating stories related to entrepreneurs and new businesses, workforce development system improvements for better hiring, business ownership and executive leadership, expanded assistance for government contracting, and strengthening the collective capacity to dismantle institutional racism.
- Investment strategies cover identifying and addressing inequities and infrastructure gaps, investments in displaced and unemployed workers, and connecting graduates to employment in the regional economy.
- Competitiveness strategies in the framework additionally address the need to better build a global reputation and competitiveness; promote a start-up economy and entrepreneurial spirit; prepare effectively for business expansion; and link businesses economic contributions to community benefits (such as by “engag[ing] leaders at major companies to assess and address impacts to local communities”).
- Industry-focused strategies speak to leveraging the region's strong technology foundation alongside traditionally strong industry clusters that include aerospace, maritime, military, and health care.
- Resiliency strategies address reinforcing regional efforts to address housing affordability, transportation and mobility needs for businesses and workers, and relief programs to address poverty.

#### Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050

The PSRC's Vision 2050 is a Regional Economic Strategy provides a frame for Tukwila's economic development planning with relevant policy and programmatic focus areas and target industries:

#### Expanding Economic Opportunity

- Equity focus throughout economic development efforts
- Expand region's childcare ecosystem
- Expand support for small and medium sized businesses and businesses owned by marginalized communities
- Advance economic development with small cities and rural communities
- Encourage economic growth across all parts of the region
- Provide adequate support for pre-K through 12 education systems that serve all students

- Coordinate and expand programs in higher education and training to address workforce gaps and advance economic opportunity for all
- Embrace, celebrate, and promote the diversity of the region’s people

### **Global Competitiveness**

- Strengthen the region’s regulatory and industry competitiveness framework
- Build resiliency into the region’s export-focused industries
- Sustain and evolve the conditions necessary for innovation
- Strengthen and coordinate recruitment, retention, and investment efforts
- Support and promote international trade and tourism
- Preserve, protect, and support ports, industrial lands, military installations, and maritime sites
- Build up and sustain ports and other infrastructure to support trade, logistics, and freight mobility
- Sustain and grow commercial air travel connections domestically and globally

### **Quality of Life**

- Focus new growth in urban areas, regional centers, and cities
- Ensure a diversity of housing stock that is affordable and connected to jobs
- Improve the region’s transportation system
- Preserve, enhance and improve the region’s environmentally critical lands
- Ensure the region is a healthy place to live, work, and play for all residents
- Protect the global environment
- Build resiliency into, and increase access to, the region’s arts, culture, and tourism industries

### **New and Expanded Focus Areas**

- **Equity** – *Forward Together* Framework and Regional Equity Strategy
- **Health** – Address health inequities, respond to COVID-19 impacts.
- **Broadband** – Leverage federal funding opportunities and growth broadband capacity.
- **Housing** – PSRC Regional Housing Strategy
- **Workforce** - Develop strategies and analysis around the region’s workforce development systems to strengthen economic recovery, support equity, build resiliency, and develop the region’s talent pipeline. Expand childcare capacity.
- **Local Planning** – Technical Assistance to jurisdictions on economic development elements, tracking job distribution, work from home impacts, and women in the workforce.

- **Regional Competitiveness** – Update Industrial Lands Analysis, examine tax increment financing best practices, provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions in applying for federal recovery funding, and support new industry growth opportunities (Commerce’s ICAP)
- **Business Recovery**
- **Industry Resilience**

**Key Regional Export Industries and 2022 Focus**

- **Aerospace & Aviation** – Washington Space Economy Report and Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission, expand production of sustainable aviation fuels.
- **Information and Communication Technology** – Analyze impact of expertise in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and cybersecurity
- **Maritime**
- **Military and Defense**
- **Life Sciences and Global Health**
- **Clean Technology**
- **Tourism, Arts & Culture** – Accelerate recovery of arts and culture institutions, marketing efforts related to recovery and new trade.
- **Transportation and Logistics**
- **Business Services**

## Appendix B. SWOT Analysis

The following section outlines the results of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis conducted using data from the Landscape Assessment as well as data from recent engagement.

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### Strengths

Sustainable economy built upon robust retail, hospitality, and experiential sectors with various strong anchors and major employers  
Multiculturalism and diversity, including culturally diverse businesses  
Westfield Mall and Southcenter Blvd as centers of economic vitality  
Planned or potential investment / development in the City (Boeing Longacres, Tukwila South, etc)  
Vibrant community: Welcoming, tight-knit, diverse, multi-cultural, and inter-generational  
Tourism: A family-friendly destination with plentiful retail and entertainment offerings  
Locational Advantage: nearby airport, major highways, & Seattle  
Support for businesses of all sizes

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### Weaknesses

Crime, homelessness, and drug use  
Difficulty in finding and retaining labor  
High commercial rent costs  
Low wages  
high Cost of Living  
Auto-Reliance

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### Opportunities

Workforce development: collaboration between school systems and businesses (ex. CorePlus Aerospace)  
Increasing residential population and developing affordable or workforce housing  
Establishing a larger and more cohesive identity (beyond shopping malls)  
Infrastructure enhancement: transportation, park, and recreation improvements  
Trust building with communities of color  
Strengthen network between the City, key businesses, workforce development groups, and other business assistance groups

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### Threats

Public safety concerns  
Regulatory inefficiency, such as permitting and inspections, or regulations that challenge small businesses  
Some lack of essential services and community support space, including health care, grocery, social services, and community gathering space  
City reputation for businesses, residents, and visitors.