



TO: Tukwila Planning Commission

FROM: Nora Gierloff, AICP, Community Development Director

BY: Isaac Gloor, Senior Planner, DCD

DATE: July 23, 2026

SUBJECT: **Simplifying Tukwila's Mixed-Use Zoning Districts**

ISSUE

The Department is considering the potential to simplify the City's portfolio of mixed-use zoning districts by exploring consolidation of those that may be duplicative or underutilized, including Office (O), Residential Commercial Center (RCC), Mixed Use Office (MUO), and Regional Commercial Mixed-Use (RCM).

DISCUSSION

Background

This topic was previously discussed with the Planning Commission at a meeting in May of 2026. To review a detailed background on this topic, please review the [Agenda Packet for that meeting](#).

The discussion in May focused on a generalized discussion of the goals and regulations for land within four similar and underperforming zoning districts:

- Office (O): Almost exclusively permits office uses. Found near Southcenter Boulevard, and in small patches elsewhere in the City.
- Mixed-Use Office: Permits a somewhat limited array of mixed-uses, including residential, commercial, and office uses, at low densities. Geographically limited, this zoning district exists only within the North Tukwila International Boulevard corridor.
- Regional Commercial Mixed-Use (RCM): Permits an expansive array of mixed-uses at low densities. Found along the Southcenter Boulevard and Interurban Avenue corridors.
- Residential Commercial Center (RCC): Permits small-scale commercial and residential uses. Found in small clusters near Crestview Park, Macadam and S 144th Street, the Tukwila Community Center and north Allentown, and along Beacon Ave S in the Ryan Hill neighborhood.

The discussion centered around the lack of investment in areas within these zones due to outdated and restrictive standards, as well as the inefficiency of the regulation of multiple zoning districts with broadly similar standards and goals.

Additionally, the Commission discussed the potential value of the RCC district as providing crucial neighborhood amenities for low and medium density areas. While that zoning district currently is underutilized, it could serve as a focal core for neighborhoods and foster walkability and proximity of crucial neighborhood services.

In this meeting, the goal is to further consider the consolidation of Tukwila's mixed-use zoning districts.

Consolidation into Neighborhood Commercial Center Zoning District

Staff have determined that the goals of the Neighborhood Commercial Center (NCC) zoning district have broad overlap with the goals and intentions for all four underperforming mixed-use districts under discussion. The description of the NCC district can be found at [Policy LU 3.5, on page LU-6 of Tukwila's Comprehensive Plan](#):

Description of the Neighborhood Commercial Center Zoning District

Policy LU 3.5: Neighborhood Commercial Center (NCC) designated areas are characterized and scaled to serve multiple residential areas with a diverse mix of uses. Uses include commercial; residential, including senior citizen housing; retail; service; office; and recreational and community facilities, generally along a transportation corridor. These uses are modified where covered by the Urban Renewal Overlay.

Description of the Four Mixed-Use Districts Under Consideration

Zones:	Description:
Mixed-Use Office:	Policy LU 3.4: Mixed Use Office (MUO) designated areas are characterized by professional and commercial office structures, mixed with retail and residential uses. These uses and densities are modified where covered by the Tukwila South Overlay.
Office:	Policy LU 3.3: Office (O) designated areas are characterized by professional and commercial office structures mixed with retail.
Residential Commercial Center:	Policy LU 3.6: Residential Commercial Center (RCC) designated areas are pedestrian friendly areas characterized and scaled to serve a local neighborhood, with a diverse mix of uses. Uses include certain commercial; residential; retail; service; office; and recreational and community facilities.
Regional Commercial Mixed Use:	Policy LU 3.8: Regional Commercial Mixed-Use (RCM) designated areas are areas characterized by commercial services, offices, lodging, entertainment, retail activities and associated warehousing, and certain accessory light industrial uses. Residential uses mixed with certain commercial uses are also allowed.

Additionally, the Neighborhood Commercial Center (NCC) zoning district was recently updated as part of the TIB Neighborhood Project. That update brought the NCC into conformance with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan. It also established a gradient of permitted densities that are highly relevant to the specific scenarios found within the four mixed-use zoning districts, with transit appropriate densities near transportation corridors, and business supporting densities on neighborhood streets.

Consolidation of all four zoning districts into the NCC would allow a broader variety of commercial and residential uses within those areas. It would also modernize standards to reflect current development trends and real estate market realities, helping to incentivize development.

Certain standards within the NCC zoning district refer specifically to Tukwila International Boulevard and should be generalized to refer to major arterials more broadly. Additionally, the name of the zoning district (“Neighborhood Commercial Center”) does not reflect the wider array of permitted uses in this district. Staff propose a change to the name of this district to Neighborhood Mixed (NM). This name better orients the uses of the zone away from exclusively commercial uses and toward mixed-uses.

Consolidation into Community Residential Zoning District

Certain parcels within the four mixed-use zoning districts under discussion may not be good candidates for consolidation into the NCC zoning district, largely due to low development capacity due to the presence of on-site environmentally critical areas.

Staff propose consolidating these properties into the “Community Residential” (CR) zoning district, Tukwila’s low and medium density residential zone. This will better reflect the parcels’ lower development capacity and prevent the increase of development pressure on environmentally critical areas, while still modernizing these areas with current development standards. Parcels proposed to be consolidated into the CR zone are described below. Attachment A features maps showing the locations of these areas.

- Map 1 (Attachment A, Page 1): Portions of the O zoning district east of 51st Ave, south of S 146th Street, and north of S 151st Street.
 - Reasoning: These parcels are heavily encumbered by wetlands and watercourses. They are best suited for low-density development.
- Map 2 (Attachment A, Page 2): Portions of the RCC zoning district north of S 144th Street, west of Interstate 5, and east of Showalter Middle School.
 - Reasoning: Several of these parcels are split-zoned between the RCC and CR zoning districts. All of them are heavily encumbered by wetlands and watercourses and best suited for low-density development.
- Map 3 (Attachment A, Page 3): Portions of the O zoning district north of S 115th Street, in the Allentown neighborhood, east of the Duwamish Hill Preserve.
 - Reasoning: These parcels are currently undeveloped and are owned by the City of Tukwila, which has plans to incorporate them into the Duwamish Hill Preserve park. The City uses the CR zoning district for park uses.
- Map 4 (Attachment A, Page 4): Portions of the O zoning district north of S Ryan Way and west of 47th Ave S.
 - Reasoning: One of these parcels is developed with a single-family home. The other parcel is undeveloped and features no access except through the first parcel. They stand alone in a low-density, heavily encumbered part of the City, and are best suited for low-density development.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

See the below list for a summary of anticipated amendments to Tukwila's regulations, along with associated Comprehensive Plan changes:

- Amendments to regulations for the NCC zoning district to ensure standards fit well within the district's expanded scope. Change of name of NCC zoning district to Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NM) to better reflect the district's permitted uses.
 - See Attachment B.
- Removal of all references and regulations relating to the MUO, O, RCM, and RCC zoning districts.
 - All changes will be available in ordinance form at a future meeting or public hearing date.
- Amendments to the City's zoning map to shift all parcels currently zoned MUO, O, RCM, or RCC into either the Community Residential zoning district or the newly amended Neighborhood Mixed-Use district.
 - See Attachment C.
- Miscellaneous Comprehensive Plan updates to reflect changed conditions and/or State requirements.
 - All changes will be available in ordinance form at a future meeting or public hearing date.

NEXT STEPS

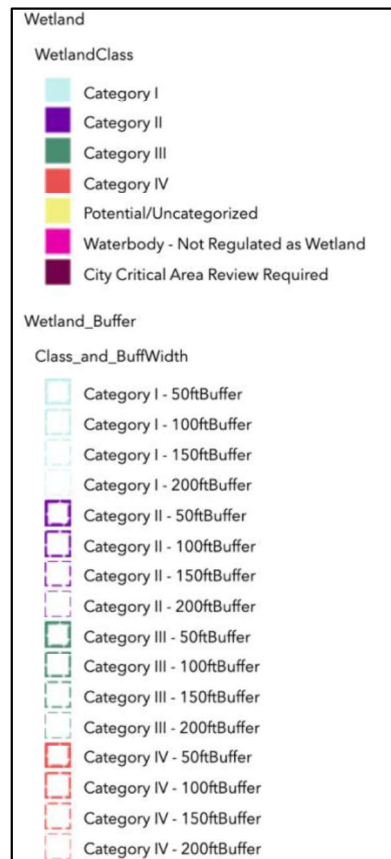
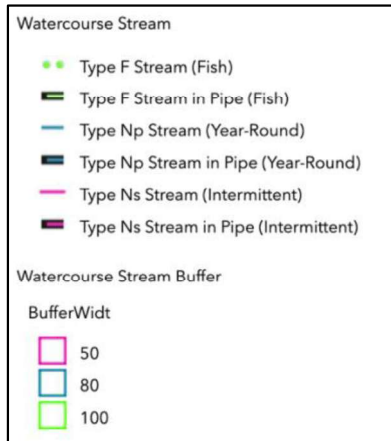
The intended outcome of this meeting is for City Staff to receive guidance from the Planning Commission regarding the proposed zoning consolidation, in anticipation of a public hearing on this topic, to be held in August of 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

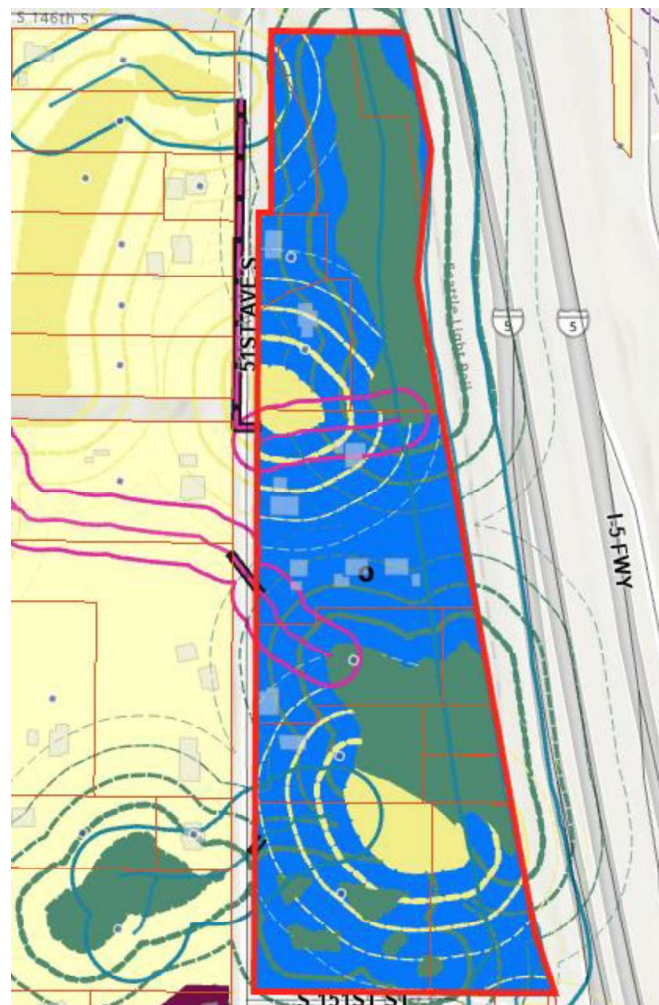
- A. Parcels Proposed for Consolidation into Community Residential Zoning District
- B. Draft Proposed TMC 18.22: Neighborhood Mixed-Use Zoning District
- C. Draft Proposed Zoning Map

Attachment A: Parcels Proposed for Consolidation into the Community Residential Zoning District

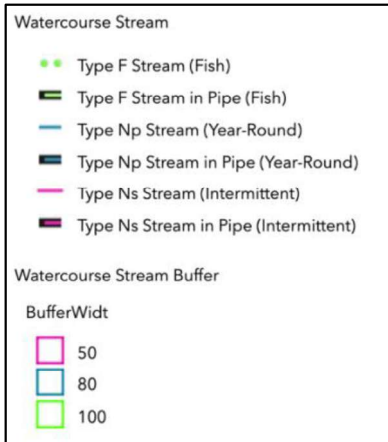
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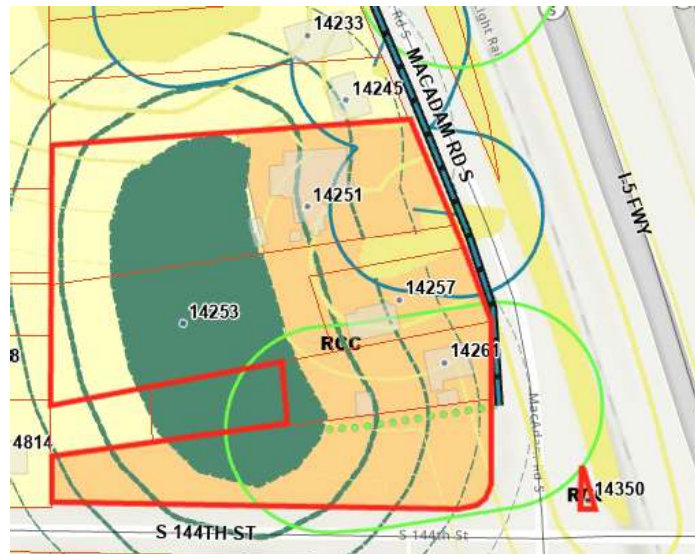
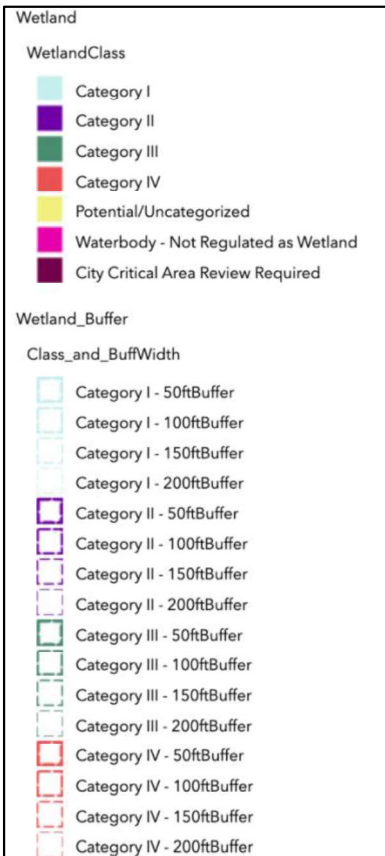
Map 1: These Office zoned parcels are heavily encumbered by wetlands and watercourses. They are best suited for low-density development. See legend at left.



Legend



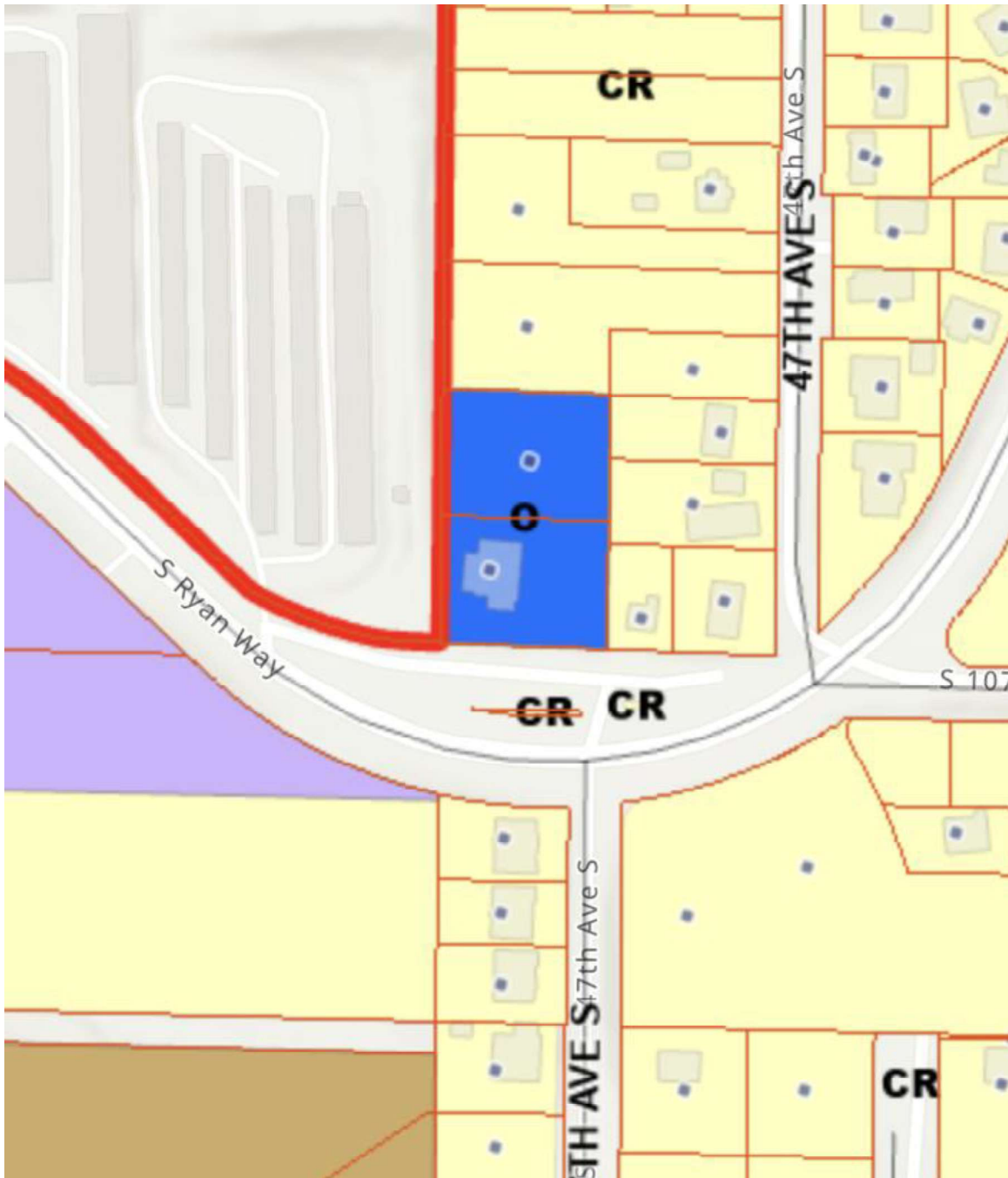
Map 2: Several of these parcels are split-zoned between the RCC and CR zoning districts. All of them are heavily encumbered by wetlands and watercourses and best suited for low-density development. See legend at left.



Map 3: These Office zoned parcels are currently undeveloped and are owned by the City of Tukwila, which has plans to incorporate them into the Duwamish Hill Preserve park. The City uses the CR zoning district for park uses.



Map 4: One of these Office zoned parcels is developed with a single-family home. The other parcel is undeveloped and features no access except through the first parcel. They stand alone in a low-density, heavily encumbered part of the City, and are best suited for low-density development.



CHAPTER 18.22
NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE (NM) DISTRICT

§ 18.22.010. Purpose.

A. This district implements the Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NM) Comprehensive Plan designation. It is intended to provide for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods that bring together medium and high density housing, retail, services, and community gathering spaces along key corridors. Scaled to serve multiple residential areas, this district fosters vibrant, connected places where people can live, shop, and gather close to home.

§ 18.22.020. Land Uses Allowed.

A. Refer to TMC Chapter 18.09, "Land Uses Allowed by District." Parcels within a Commercial Redevelopment Area may be permitted to aggregate with, and use the development standards and permitted uses of, any adjacent parcel within the NM zoning district, pursuant to TMC Section 18.60.100.

§ 18.22.030. On-Site Hazardous Substances Prohibited.

A. No on-site hazardous substance processing and handling, or hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities shall be permitted, unless clearly incidental and secondary to a permitted use. On-site hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities shall be subject to the State siting criteria (Chapter 70.105 RCW). See TMC Chapter 21.08.

§ 18.22.040. Design Standards.

A. All development within the NM zoning district shall be subject to design standards and procedures in accordance with the provisions found at TMC Chapter 18.60, "Design Review."

§ 18.22.050. Street Frontage Improvements.

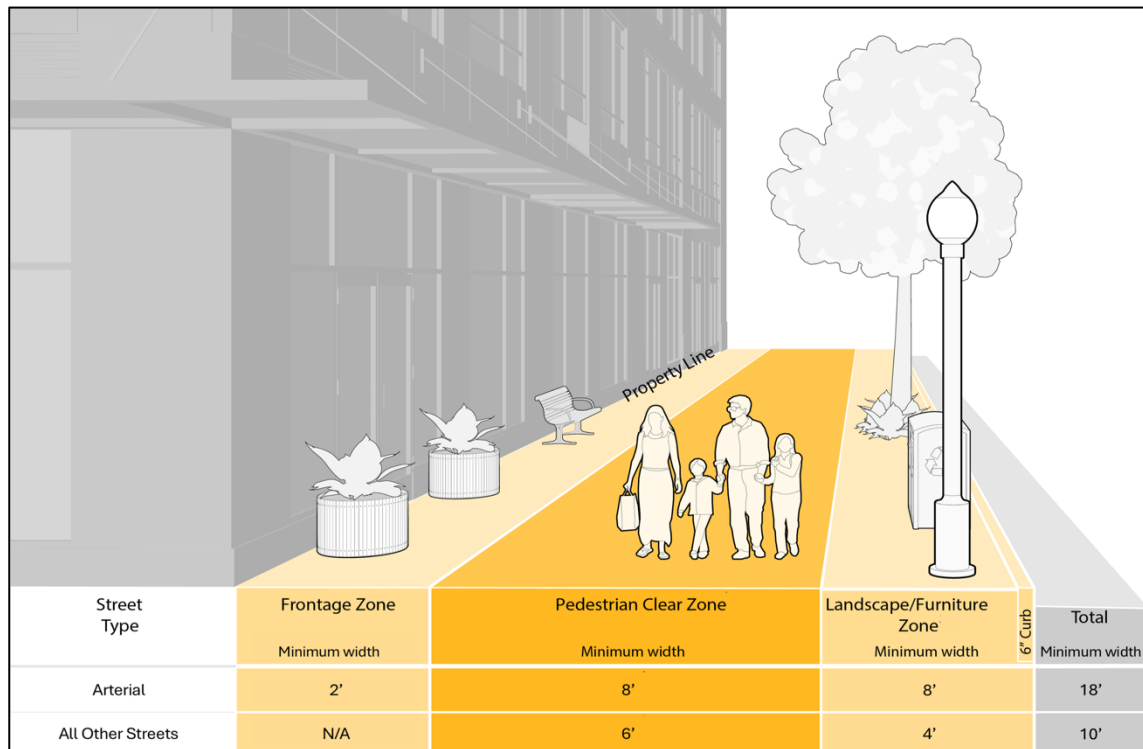
A. **Applicability:** In addition to all projects required to install frontage improvements by any other section or chapter of the TMC, all projects that propose to construct new structures that will feature any use that is not an accessory use shall install frontage improvements in accordance with this TMC Section 18.22.050. The following frontages are not subject to the requirements of this section, but may be subject to frontage improvement requirements found in other sections or chapters of the TMC:

1. Frontages that have been previously improved, when the improvements immediately adjacent to the site feature, at a minimum, a 6 foot pedestrian clear zone separated from the street by a 4 foot landscape/furniture zone.
2. Frontages along Southcenter Boulevard.
3. Frontages along Interurban Ave S.

B. **Standards:** All projects subject to this section shall install improvements on all frontages. In addition to the following listed standards, improvements shall conform to the street designation determined by the Department of Public Works or the Department of Community Development, and shall meet the minimum standards of TMC Section 17.20.040H, "Street Components and Improvement Requirements," and the "Tukwila Infrastructure Design and Construction Standards." In areas of conflict, priority shall be given to this section (TMC Section 18.22.050), then TMC Section 17.20.040H, then the "Tukwila Infrastructure Design and Construction Standards." The improvements required in this section shall be installed only at the back-of-curb. Required improvements may be located on private property if permanent public easements are provided, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Public Works.

See Figure 18-62 for a sidewalk component dimension diagram.

Figure 18-62: Sidewalk Component Dimensions



1. Sidewalk Zones and Widths: Frontages in the NM zoning district shall feature the following zones:

a. Frontage Zone: This area is defined as the area between the property line and pedestrian clear zone. This zone may be able to accommodate sidewalk cafes, store entrances, retail display, landscaping, transit stop amenities, or other features that activate and enhance the pedestrian environment. Wider frontage zones provide more room for future tenants and residents to activate the public right-of-way in a manner compatible with street trees and other required features between the frontage zone and curb.

(1) Minimum Width:

- (a) Arterials: Two feet.
- (b) All other streets: Not required.

b. Pedestrian Clear Zone: This area is defined as the area of the sidewalk corridor that is specifically reserved for pedestrian travel. Street furniture, street trees, planters, and other vertical elements such as poles, fire hydrants and street furniture, as well as temporary signs and other items shall not protrude into the pedestrian clear zone. The minimum width shall be as follows:

(1) Minimum Width:

- (a) Arterials: Eight feet.
- (b) All Other Streets: Six feet.

c. Landscape/Furniture Zone: This area is defined as the area between the roadway curb face and the front edge of the pedestrian clear zone. This zone buffers pedestrians from the adjacent roadway and is the appropriate location for bioretention cells, rain gardens, street furniture, art, street trees and vegetation, and includes the six-inch curb in its dimensions. It is also the preferred location for other elements such as signage, pedestrian lighting, hydrants, and above and below grade utilities. Clearance and setback requirements apply to many elements located in the landscape/furniture zone. In transit areas, the landscape/furniture zone may be utilized for transit patron waiting, boarding and alighting and may include transit signage, shelters, benches, litter receptacles, real-time display, off-board payment, and pedestrian scaled lighting.

(1) **Minimum Width:** The minimum widths shown below may be increased by the Department on frontages with unique features, including transit stops.

____ (a) Arterials: Eight feet.

____ (b) All Other Streets: Four feet.

(2) **Trees:** Street trees shall be spaced to maximize tree growth based on size. Species shall be chosen from the City of Tukwila Approved Tree List. Other species may be approved by the Department. Chosen street tree species shall be non-columnar and shall be chosen from among large species if the planting location is along Tukwila International Boulevard or Southcenter Boulevard, or from among the medium or large species if the planting location is along any other street. Planting shall meet the minimum standards of TMC Chapter 18.52.

C. **Alternative Sidewalk Designs:** Alternative sidewalk designs may be approved by the Department if the alternative design meets the following standards:

- ____ 1. The alternative design provides a barrier free, safe pedestrian route; and
2. The alternative design accommodates all required elements of the sidewalk in the area, such as transit waiting areas or bicycle parking; and
3. The alternative design results in fewer removals of existing mature vegetation than would be required with strict compliance; and/or
4. The alternative design enables green stormwater infrastructure above stormwater code requirements; and/or
5. The alternative design will avoid costly utility relocations that are not recommended by the Department of Public Works; and/or
6. The alternative design allows for more extensive sidewalk improvements (one block minimum) compared to strict compliance with the sidewalk standards; and/or
7. The alternative design is demonstrated to be necessary to accommodate reasonable development of a property due to site specific circumstances relating to the property's size, shape, or encumbrance by environmentally critical areas; and/or
8. The alternative design is demonstrated to result in fewer impacts on wetlands, watercourses, or the shoreline; and/or
9. The alternative design better aligns with a separate project that will modify the project site's frontage within the next five years, as determined by the Department.

§ 18.22.060. Dimensional and Density Standards.

A. Development within the NM district shall conform to the following listed and referenced standards.

NM DIMENSIONAL AND DENSITY STANDARDS		
Property Location	Parcels Within 500 Feet of a Principal or Minor Arterial Street ¹	All Other Parcels
Minimum Lot Area	None	
Residential Density	No Maximum	
Setbacks	Fronts, Sides, Rear	Front
	Entrances of Street Facing First-Floor Homes: Minimum: 6'	Minimum: 6'
	All other Uses: Minimum: 0'	Sides & Rear Minimum: 10'
Maximum Development Coverage	75%	
Ground Floor Uses	Parcels with any frontage on a principal, minor, or collector arterial: A minimum of 60% of the ground floor façade area along any arterial shall be dedicated to non-residential uses. As part of a Type 2 Design Review permit, this requirement may be waived if at least 60% of the ground floor's façade area is designed such that it may be "Easily Adaptable". See TMC 18.06.249.	
Maximum Building Heights	Base Height Limit: 65 feet	Base Height Limit: 50 feet
	Incentive Height Limit ² : 90 feet	Incentive Height Limit ² : 70 feet

¹This includes all parcels where any portion of the parcel is within 500 linear feet, as the crow flies, from any portion of a street classified as a principal or minor arterial by the City of Tukwila's Comprehensive Plan. This includes sidewalk areas of principal or minor arterials that lie within private property but are subject to permanent easements for public access.

²Projects may use incentive standards only if the project opts in to and is compliant with the provisions of the Development Incentive Program found at TMC Chapter 18.47.

CHAPTER 18.22
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTER (NCC) DISTRICT

§ 18.22.010. Purpose:

A. This district implements the Neighborhood Commercial Center (NCC) Comprehensive Plan designation. It is intended to provide for pedestrian-friendly areas characterized and scaled to serve multiple residential areas, with a diverse mix of uses.

§ 18.22.020. Land Uses Allowed:

A. Refer to TMC Chapter 18.09, "Land Uses Allowed by District." Parcels within a Commercial Redevelopment Area may be permitted to aggregate with, and use the development standards and permitted uses of, any adjacent parcel within the NCC zoning district, pursuant to TMC Section 18.60.100.

§ 18.22.030. On-Site Hazardous Substances Prohibited:

A. No on-site hazardous substance processing and handling, or hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities shall be permitted, unless clearly incidental and secondary to a permitted use. On-site hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities shall be subject to the State siting criteria (Chapter 70.105 RCW). See TMC Chapter 21.08.

§ 18.22.040. Design Standards:

A. All development within the NCC zoning district shall be subject to design standards and procedures in accordance with the provisions found at TMC Chapter 18.60, "Design Review."

§ 18.22.050. Street Frontage Improvements:

A. **Applicability:** In addition to all projects required to install frontage improvements by any other section or chapter of the TMC, all projects that propose to construct new structures that will feature any use that is not an accessory use shall install frontage improvements in accordance with this TMC Section 18.22.050. These requirements may be waived or altered by the Director via a Type 2 Design Review application if the applicant demonstrates the following:

1. That the proposed project is located on a site for which the frontage was previously improved but does not comply with the standards of this section, and the project will not result in an increase of multi-modal visitors to the site of greater than 25% from the previously approved use. The Director may require the provision of a multi-modal traffic study that compares total site-visitation both before and after construction.

B. **Standards:** All projects subject to this section shall install improvements on all frontages. In addition to the following listed standards, improvements shall conform to the street designation determined by the Department of Public Works or the Department of Community Development, and shall meet the minimum standards of TMC Section 17.20.040H, "Street Components and Improvement Requirements," and the "Tukwila Infrastructure Design and Construction Standards." In areas of conflict, priority shall be given to this section (TMC Section 18.22.050), then TMC Section 17.20.040H, then the "Tukwila Infrastructure Design and Construction Standards." The improvements required in this section shall be installed only at the back-of-curb. Required improvements may be located on private property if permanent public easements are provided, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Public Works.

1. **Sidewalk Zones and Widths:** Frontages in the NCC zoning district shall feature the following zones:

a. **Frontage Zone:** This area is defined as the area between the property line and pedestrian clear zone. This zone may be able to accommodate sidewalk cafes, store entrances, retail display, landscaping, transit stop amenities, or other features that activate and enhance the pedestrian environment. Wider frontage zones provide more room for future tenants and residents to activate the public right-of-way in a manner compatible with street trees and other required features between the frontage zone and curb.

——(1) **Minimum Width:** Two feet.

b. **Pedestrian Clear Zone:** This area is defined as the area of the sidewalk corridor that is specifically reserved for pedestrian travel. Street furniture, street trees, planters, and other vertical elements such as poles, fire hydrants and street furniture, as well as temporary signs and other items shall not protrude into the pedestrian clear zone. The minimum width shall be as follows:

(1) **Minimum Width:**

(a) Tukwila International Boulevard: Eight feet.

(b) All Other Streets: Six feet.

c. **Landscape/Furniture Zone:** This area is defined as the area between the roadway curb face and the front edge of the pedestrian clear zone. This zone buffers pedestrians from the adjacent roadway and is the appropriate location for bioretention cells, rain gardens, street furniture, art, street trees and vegetation, and includes the six-inch curb in its dimensions. It is also the preferred location for other elements such as signage, pedestrian lighting, hydrants, and above and below grade utilities. Clearance and setback requirements apply to many elements located in the landscape/furniture zone. In transit areas, the landscape/furniture zone may be utilized for transit patron waiting, boarding and alighting and may include transit signage, shelters, benches, litter receptacles, real-time display, off-board payment, and pedestrian-scaled lighting.

(1) **Minimum Width:** The minimum widths shown below may be increased by the Department on frontages with unique features, including transit stops.

——(a) Tukwila International Boulevard: Eight feet.

——(b) All Other Streets: Six feet.

(2) **Trees:** Street trees shall be spaced to maximize tree growth based on size. Species shall be chosen from the City of Tukwila Approved Tree List. Other species may be approved by the Department. Chosen street tree species shall be non-columnar and shall be chosen from among large species if the planting location is along Tukwila International Boulevard or Southcenter Boulevard, or from among the medium or large species if the planting location is along any other street. Planting shall meet the minimum standards of TMC Chapter 18.52.

C.—Alternative Sidewalk Designs: Alternative sidewalk designs may be approved by the Department if the alternative design meets the following standards:

- 1.—The alternative design provides a barrier free, safe pedestrian route; and
- 2.—The alternative design accommodates all required elements of the sidewalk in the area, such as transit waiting areas or bicycle parking; and
- 3.—The alternative design results in fewer removals of existing mature vegetation than would be required with strict compliance; and/or
- 4.—The alternative design enables green stormwater infrastructure above stormwater code requirements; and/or
- 5.—The alternative design will avoid costly utility relocations that are not recommended by the Department of Public Works; and/or
- 6.—The alternative design allows for more extensive sidewalk improvements (one block minimum) compared to strict compliance with the sidewalk standards; and/or
- 7.—The alternative design better aligns with a separate project that will modify the project site's frontage within the next five years, as determined by the Department.

~~§ 18.22.060. Dimensional and Density Standards.~~

A.—Development within the NGC district shall conform to the following listed and referenced standards:

NCC DIMENSIONAL AND DENSITY STANDARDS			
Property Location	Parcels Within 500 Feet of Tukwila International Boulevard¹		All Other Parcels
Minimum Lot Area	None		
Residential Density	No Maximum		
Setbacks²	Fronts, Sides, Rear		Front
	Entrances of Street Facing First Floor Homes Minimum: 6' Maximum Average: 10'		Minimum: 6'
	All other Uses: Minimum: 0' Maximum Average: 10'		Sides & Rear
			Minimum: 10'
Maximum Development Coverage	75%		
Ground Floor Uses	Parcels with any frontage on Tukwila International Boulevard: Non-residential uses required on a minimum of 60% of the ground floor's façade area. As part of a Type 2 Design Review permit, this requirement may be waived if at least 60% of the ground floor's façade area is designed such that it may be "Easily Adaptable". See TMC 18.06.249.		
Minimum Building Heights	30-foot		N/A
Maximum Building Heights	Base Height: 65-foot		Base Height: 50-foot
	Parcels South of S-146th Street:	All other Parcels:	Incentive Height³: 70-foot
	Incentive Height³: 125-foot	Incentive Height³: 90-foot	

¹—This includes all parcels where any portion of the parcel is within 500 linear feet, as the crow flies, from any portion of Tukwila International Boulevard, including sidewalk areas of the Boulevard that lie within private property but are subject to permanent easements for public access.

2—Maximum setback standards may be altered by the Director via a Type 2 Design Review application, provided the applicant demonstrates that: (i) strict adherence to setback rules will result in costly utility relocations that are not recommended by the Department of Public Works; or (ii) required sight distance triangles prohibit structures from compliance, and the issue is not mitigatable by enhancements to the project's frontage; or (iii) the proposed structure(s) exhibits a unique design or use that is incompatible with the setback requirement, or that would be better served by an alternative setback. In such cases, the required setback alteration shall be the minimum necessary to avoid the identified impacts and accomplish the project's goals.

3—Projects may use incentive standards only if the project opts in to and is compliant with the provisions of the Development Incentive Program found at TMC Chapter 18.47.

City of Tukwila Zoning Map

Figure 18-10

