

TOWN CENTER PLAN & CODE AMENDMENT

DRAFT PLAN

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Contents

- Introduction.....1**
 - Overview 1
 - Purpose and Scope..... 2
- Objectives.....3**
 - Vision for Town Center..... 3
 - Vision Statement: Urban and Natural 3
 - Guiding Principles 5
 - From Vision to Reality 5
- Town Center Today..... 7**
 - Planning Process and Community Engagement.... 8
 - Community Events 8
 - Civic Meetings..... 8
 - Stakeholder Workshops 9
 - Existing Land Uses and Urban Form..... 10
 - Adjacent Uses 12
 - Ownership Patterns 12
 - Code Audit Overview 14
 - Development Constraints..... 15
 - Market and Economic Context..... 17
- Land Use 18**
 - Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... 18
 - Existing and Planned Land Use and Development 20
 - Strategy..... 25
 - Updated Land Use Concept & Regulating Plan..... 25

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Envisioned Land Use Pattern | 29 |
| Code Updates..... | 30 |
| Frontage Types & Standards | 31 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 37 |
| Land Use Goals and Policies | 37 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions | 39 |
| Housing..... | 41 |
| Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... | 41 |
| Strategy..... | 44 |
| Amount, Type, and Configuration of Housing..... | 44 |
| Affordable Housing | 44 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 46 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions | 47 |
| Mobility & Streets..... | 49 |
| Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... | 49 |
| Pedestrian and Bicycle Access..... | 49 |
| Transit Service | 49 |
| Vehicular Access..... | 50 |
| Strategy..... | 51 |
| Street Type Designations..... | 52 |
| Multimodal Access | 62 |
| Transportation Demand Management | 63 |
| Transit-Oriented Development..... | 63 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 64 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions | 66 |
| Recommended Mitigation Actions | 68 |
| Community Design..... | 70 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... | 70 |
| Strategy..... | 72 |
| Urban Form..... | 72 |
| Streetscape Activation | 73 |
| Transitions to Surrounding Neighborhoods | 75 |
| Public Art and Cultural Expression | 76 |
| Ensuring Quality..... | 77 |
| A Town Center That Feels Like Home..... | 77 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 78 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions | 79 |
| Public Space, Parks, and Trails..... | 80 |
| Objectives..... | 80 |
| Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... | 80 |
| Strategy..... | 82 |
| Sammamish Commons..... | 82 |
| Green Spine | 82 |
| Town Square..... | 84 |
| Additional Plazas and Open Spaces..... | 85 |
| Trails and Pedestrian Walkways..... | 85 |
| Natural Areas | 86 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 87 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions | 87 |
| Civic, Cultural, and Commercial Uses..... | 89 |
| Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... | 89 |
| Strategy..... | 89 |
| Public Facilities and Civic Anchors | 89 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Arts and Culture | 90 |
| Commercial Uses..... | 90 |
| Civic and Cultural Identity | 91 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 92 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions..... | 93 |
| Capital Facilities..... | 94 |
| Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities..... | 94 |
| Inventory of Existing Facilities..... | 94 |
| Future Needs | 95 |
| General Water and Sewer Facility Considerations | 96 |
| Processes to Install Water and Sewer Facilities | 96 |
| Level of Service (LOS) Standards | 97 |
| Priority Projects List | 97 |
| City Capital Investments and Operating Costs | 99 |
| Goals and Policies..... | 101 |
| Recommended Implementation Actions | 102 |
| Implementation & Monitoring..... | 103 |
| Phased Development and Investment Strategy | 103 |
| Short-Term Priorities (1-5 Years)..... | 103 |
| Mid-Term Progress (5-10 Years) | 104 |
| Long-Term Outcomes (15+ Years) | 104 |
| Key Metrics for Success | 105 |
| Adaptive Management and Future Updates | 106 |
| Monitoring and Reporting..... | 106 |
| Adjustments and Amendments | 106 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Looking Ahead: A Town Center That Evolves with Sammamish | 107 |
| Appendices..... | 108 |

Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Town Center District Map | 7 |
| Figure 2. Town Center Existing and Anticipated Land Use..... | 11 |
| Figure 3. Town Center Ownership..... | 13 |
| Figure 4. Code Audit Density Analysis Graphic | 15 |
| Figure 5. Environment Constraints on Development in Town Center..... | 16 |
| Figure 6. Sammamish Housing Production in the City of Sammamish and in Town Center | 19 |
| Figure 7. Existing and Planned Development in Town Center | 20 |
| Figure 8. Proposed Development in Town Center | 22 |
| Figure 9. Sky Apartments in Sammamish Town Center | 23 |
| Figure 10. Heartwood Apartments in Seattle..... | 24 |
| Figure 11. Land Use Concept..... | 25 |
| Figure 12. Land Use Development Intensity | 26 |
| Figure 13. Urban Core District Intensity | 27 |
| Figure 14. Urban Mixed District Intensity..... | 27 |
| Figure 15. Garden Mixed District Intensity..... | 28 |
| Figure 16. Town Center Current vs Proposed Zoning..... | 28 |
| Figure 17. Components of a Form-Based Code Strategy | 30 |
| Figure 18. Linear Frontage..... | 31 |
| Figure 19. Plaza Frontage | 32 |
| Figure 20. Forecourt Frontage | 33 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 21. Landscape Frontage | 34 |
| Figure 22. Porch / Stoop / Terrace Frontage..... | 35 |
| Figure 23. Parking Frontage..... | 36 |
| Figure 24. Sammamish Home Prices vs Median Incomes..... | 42 |
| Figure 25. 2044 Housing Growth by Income Band in Sammamish | 45 |
| Figure 26. Baseline Street Network 2044 | 51 |
| Figure 27. Proposed Street Network Designations | 53 |
| Figure 28. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Core street..... | 54 |
| Figure 29. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Core Multimodal street..... | 55 |
| Figure 30. An Urban Core - Multimodal street with the Shared-Use Path option | 56 |
| Figure 31. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Mixed street | 57 |
| Figure 32. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Mixed - Multimodal street..... | 58 |
| Figure 33. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of Residential street | 59 |
| Figure 34. Alley Street Type..... | 60 |
| Figure 35. Trail Street Type | 61 |
| Figure 36. Recommended Mitigation Actions..... | 69 |
| Figure 37. Setbacks from 228th Avenue Southeast | 70 |
| Figure 38. Northwest corner of SE 4th St and 228th Avenue Southeast | 71 |
| Figure 39. University Village provides a lively mix of active uses and storefronts to engage passersby | 74 |
| Figure 40. Open-air retail helps to activate the pedestrian corridors in the Woodinville Schoolhouse District..... | 75 |
| Figure 41. Public art and sculpture, such as Synergy Rising, can act as distinguishing features that ground Town Center and contribute to its identity..... | 76 |
| Figure 42. The Atlanta Beltline is a multimodal green corridor that both unifies and beautifies the city..... | 83 |

Draft Plan

Introduction

Overview

Sammamish Town Center (Town Center) has long been envisioned as the civic and cultural heart of the community, a place that welcomes residents and visitors for shopping, gathering, working, learning, and living. The 2008 Town Center Plan (2008 Plan) documented this vision for transformative growth, concentrating new housing and employment in a walkable area while protecting Sammamish’s scenic character and environmental assets.

In the years since the adoption of the 2008 Plan, Sammamish has evolved considerably. Changing market dynamics, a regional housing crisis, and responsive state housing mandates require a fresh approach to land use, housing, and transportation. Today, Sammamish faces pressing needs for affordable and diverse housing, better mobility options, improved climate resilience, and streamlined regulations that incentivize high-quality development.

The 2025 Town Center Plan & Code Amendment Project (2025 Update) responds to these changes. Building on the positive elements and guiding principles established in 2008, this updated Plan modernizes the Town Center’s regulatory framework so that implementation can remain aligned with Sammamish’s community values while responding to the new challenges faced by the city.

Specifically, the Plan emphasizes:

1. **Housing Affordability and Diversity.** With a renewed focus on meeting both local and regional housing needs, this Plan introduces refined strategies to encourage more types of homes, from middle housing and multi-family apartments to senior housing and mixed-income developments.
2. **Regulatory Streamlining.** The 2008 Town Center Code introduced administrative tools such as the Unified Zone Development Plan (UZDP) process that have proven redundant and cumbersome in practice. This update streamlines administrative practices, clarifies incentives, and removes duplicative or conflicting regulations. Moving to a new form-based code will better align City regulations with current goals and development feasibility and reduce uncertainty for applicants. This in turn can shorten development timelines while ensuring that any new development meets high-quality urban design and environmental benchmarks.
3. **Mobility and Street Design.** The 2008 Plan laid the groundwork for a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly network, but never solidified its approach with permanent street standards or requirements for dedicated non-motorized infrastructure. The 2025 Update will adopt new permanent street standards that expand on designs for pedestrian walkways and trails, and

renew the City’s emphasis on safe, separated bicycle and multimodal facilities within Town Center.

4. **Community Identity and Public Spaces.** Town Center is envisioned as a major gathering place for public life in Sammamish. Features like the Sammamish Commons, the future Town Square, the library, the Community and Aquatic Center, and other civic destinations form a nexus of community activity. The 2025 Plan Update looks for ways to strengthen these civic anchors by encouraging more programmed community events, creating flexible outdoor spaces, and integrating more public art, seating, wayfinding, and additional amenities.
5. **Environmental Stewardship.** Sammamish’s wetlands, forested hillsides, and rich wildlife habitats remain integral to the city’s identity. The 2025 Update continues to protect Town Center’s approximately 83 acres of critical areas and critical area buffers, and encourages new development to incorporate low-impact development strategies. The updated plan further aims to improve the connection between these environmental elements and the Town Center development code. Goals for climate resilience, such as green infrastructure and energy-efficient building standards, are woven throughout, reflecting Sammamish’s commitment to a healthy ecosystem.

The 2025 Update builds on the foundation laid by the 2008 Plan, reflecting new input from a wide range of community members, property owners, local and state agencies, and other parties. The Town Center Plan Update process began in Fall 2023, and since that time, the effort has been shaped by continual input from the Sammamish City Council and Planning Commission, multiple workshops held with property owners and developers, outreach to neighboring residents, public comment received during project scoping, and a community Open House on Town Center.

Purpose and Scope

The 2025 Update represents a strategy change to improve outcomes and address changing needs while keeping the vision, goals, and policies largely intact from the 2008 Town Center Plan.¹ Nearly two decades of community feedback, planning, development data, and environmental analysis have been incorporated into the update project, to help ensure that Sammamish remains a livable and inclusive city. Catalysts for this Plan update include:

- **Changing Housing Needs** - New state legislation including recent housing and affordability bills and Sammamish's updated housing affordability targets underscore the need for greater variety and affordability in the city’s available housing options.
- **Evolving Market Conditions** - Commercial space remains underdeveloped in parts of Town Center, partly due to regulatory complexity and shifting consumer trends. Some housing types are not currently feasible due to challenges with the Town Center code and changing market conditions.

¹ The 2008 Town Center Plan as amended in 2020 is incorporated as [Appendix 1](#) to this document.

- **Infrastructure Goals** - An improved street, sidewalk, and trail network, along with regional transit expansions, presents new opportunities to better connect Town Center while reducing vehicle miles traveled and transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Climate Adaptation** - Extreme weather events, changing rainfall patterns, and ongoing habitat pressures have broadened the City’s approach to environmental management, stormwater, and public open spaces.

The 2025 Update functions as a subarea plan of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, bridging citywide policies and on-the-ground development in the Town Center. As such, it aligns with the goals and policies found in the Comprehensive Plan’s land use, housing, and transportation elements, and incorporates many more objectives from other elements.

Objectives

Draft Document Note: Underlined text represents key updates made to Vision statements

Vision for Town Center

This chapter includes an updated Town Center Vision Statement, a summary of public input received throughout the planning process, and a description of the desired path forward for Town Center (identified in the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement as the “Preferred Alternative”) as adopted by the City Council.

Vision Statement: Urban and Natural

The Sammamish Town Center is a vibrant, urban, family-friendly gathering place in a healthy natural setting. The city’s sense of community reflects a balance between its natural and urban characteristics.

The Town Center is **urban** in that it:

- Welcomes city residents and visitors seeking a unique place to live, work, learn, create, and play.
- Offers the range of commercial, recreational, cultural, educational, and personal services and activities that provide local citizens what they need for a full life, reflecting and embracing the increasingly diverse mixture of Sammamish’s residents.
- Creates opportunities for more affordable housing types, including apartments, condominiums, and “missing-middle” housing, that give households of all income levels the ability to live in the community.
- Offers a unique sense of place reflected by its building forms, development patterns, and public realm, which are oriented to take advantage of the city’s topography and natural assets.
- Is a central gathering place that increases social interaction and enhances art and cultural opportunities by providing for those functions, open spaces, and facilities that bring people together.

- Establishes a lively economic hub for Sammamish residents, providing opportunities for activities and social connections both day and night, rain or shine.
- Features well-designed mixed-use development that is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Is eminently walkable, with accessible sidewalks, trails, and pathways.
- Is linked to the rest of the city by an expansive pedestrian and multi-use trail network, and to the rest of the region with excellent transit service and bikeways.

The Town Center’s **natural setting** is preserved and enhanced by:

- Focusing growth into a compact, walkable core, reducing pressure on natural resources and critical areas by limiting suburban sprawl.
- Incorporating natural resources and sensitive site characteristics as amenities, highlighting these features as design elements that reflect the natural beauty of Town Center.
- Featuring a hierarchy of interconnected public and private open spaces, ranging from an active Town Square to informal gathering areas and natural open spaces with native vegetation.
- Featuring new buildings and structures that, while urban in their function, reflect a “Northwest character,” human scale, and welcoming aspect.
- Creating opportunities for climate-resilient infrastructure development and incentivizing green building design and construction practices.
- Employing a variety of environmental enhancements and sustainable stormwater management techniques to improve ecological functions, such as protections for groundwater, surface water hydrology, and wildlife habitat.

Recognizing that this vision represents an ambitious challenge, the City is prepared to take **concerted action** toward its goals by:

- Refining existing development regulations to direct new growth in a way that meets public objectives in a controlled and environmentally friendly manner.
- Fostering a public understanding and consensus for concerted action through a participatory planning process.
- Pursuing a strategic, fiscally responsible, multifaceted plan identifying public and private actions to undertake over time.
- Constructing the necessary capital improvements and “green infrastructure” to frame and support the Town Center’s growth.
- Engaging property owners and developers in partnerships and programs that produce superior new development and that meet public and private objectives.
- Integrating Town Center development efforts with other City activities in a way that equitably benefits all Sammamish residents.

Guiding Principles

Together with the Town Center Vision, the following Guiding Principles shaped the City’s approach to the Town Center Plan Update:

Provide Diverse and Affordable Housing

Make Sammamish a welcoming community for people of all ages by providing diverse housing options across various income levels, expanding opportunities for those who work here to also call Sammamish home.

Streamline the Town Center Code

Align Town Center’s development code with market realities for housing and mixed-use projects, providing both flexibility and predictability to residents, property owners, and developers.

Create a Walkable and Safe Neighborhood

Emphasize Town Center’s sustainable character and walkable appeal with an attractive streetscape, connectivity to parks and plazas, and safe, comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Create a Civic Identity in Town Center

Strengthen the civic presence of Town Center by building a Town Square for community gathering, providing flexible outdoor spaces, and integrating public art, wayfinding, and experiential amenities.

Steward the Natural Environment

Town Center is, by its nature, a sustainable neighborhood. Implement mixed-use development to create a compact and walkable district that will reduce Sammamish’s dependency on vehicular travel and associated carbon emissions.



From Vision to Reality

The goals and principles articulated in the Vision form the nucleus of every subsequent chapter in this Plan. Each policy, whether related to affordable housing, updated street standards, or open space design, arises from these core vision elements.

Refining the Regulatory Approach. The Land Use and Housing chapters detail how new zoning districts and building form standards accomplish the City’s vision of a welcoming and walkable urban core that integrates seamlessly with the natural environment.

Directing Infrastructure Investments. The Mobility, Community Design, Civic, Public Space, and Capital Facilities chapters detail the improvements necessary to realize a pedestrian-friendly district with reliable public services and robust amenities.

Ensuring Accountability and Progress. Finally, the Implementation chapter includes performance metrics and strategies to measure how effectively Sammamish is achieving its vision for Town Center year after year.

Town Center Today

Figure 1. Town Center District Map



City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

The Town Center boundary (see Figure 1), defined in the original 2008 Plan and unchanged in the 2025 Update, encompasses 240 acres and is bisected by 228th Avenue Southeast as the major north-south arterial through the district. The planning area is surrounded by wooded steep slopes and single-family residences. The Town Center Plan calls for a graduated density approach, with the most intense land uses concentrated in the Urban Core Area north of the Sammamish Commons,

tapering down to low-rise multifamily and mixed-use development at the perimeter of the district to provide a natural transition to the surrounding neighborhoods. Approximately 83 acres of Town Center have been identified as protected wetlands, streams, and other critical areas and associated buffers. These critical areas limit development on many sites, but provide opportunities for civic enhancement and passive uses such as open spaces and trails.

In the years since the adoption of the original Town Center Plan, development of The Sammamish Commons, the civic campus, housing, shops, and services all represent progress towards realizing the broader community vision for Town Center. However, much work remains. Major pillars of the plan, such as the development of multiple mixed-use centers in each “quadrant” of Town Center, have proven unworkable for a variety of reasons. The originally envisioned street network, the “Green Spine,” and regional stormwater strategies have not been realized either. The 2008 Plan also called for reevaluation of the residential and commercial development caps, which the 2025 Update aims to do. New challenges, particularly related to housing diversity and affordability, must also be addressed in the update as conditions have changed significantly since the 2008 Plan was adopted.

Planning Process and Community Engagement

The 2025 Town Center Plan Update reflects input from a wide range of community members, property owners, local and state agencies, the Sammamish City Council and Planning Commission, and other parties.

Community Events

A Town Center Open House was held in early 2024 as a holistic public engagement introductory event for the Town Center Amendment Project. The event brought together members of the community to engage with staff, advocates, regional policy bodies, and private developers to share ideas and gain insights into the different possible futures for Sammamish and Town Center. A standalone video presentation was created specifically for the Open House, and is available as part of the [video of the full event](#), including the presentation and subsequent Q&A session.

Civic Meetings

City Council approved the Town Center Plan & Code Amendment project in October 2023, and many Council and Planning Commission meetings were held during the first phase of the project to build awareness and gather information to understand what has positively contributed to growth and development in the Town Center to date. These meetings also helped identify improvements that would facilitate more affordable housing construction and the creation of a wider variety of housing types. Each meeting has agendas and videos of accessible through the City’s website, and dates are as follows:

- City Council Meeting - October 3, 2023
- Planning Commission Meeting - February 15, 2024
- Open House Presentation - February 28, 2024

- City Council Meeting - March 5, 2024
- Planning Commission Meeting - June 20, 2024
- City Council Meeting - July 16, 2024
- City Council Meeting - October 1, 2024
- Planning Commission Meeting - October 17, 2024
- Human Services Commission Meeting - April 9, 2025
- Sustainability Commission Meeting - April 10, 2025
- Sammamish Youth Board Meeting - April 21, 2025
- Sammamish Arts Commission Meeting - April 28, 2025

The following three meetings were held specifically addressing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and the appropriate scope for the Supplemental EIS (SEIS).²

- City Council Meeting - February 18, 2025
- Planning Commission Meeting - February 20, 2025
- City Council Meeting - April 1, 2025

Community Events

- Town Center Open House - February 28, 2024 [[link](#)]

Stakeholder Workshops

The project team interviewed local property owners, housing advocates, and real estate developers to gather detailed perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in the Town Center, and held two dedicated workshops in Summer 2024. From these efforts emerged a shared vision for a more flexible, user-friendly code structure, which balances the City’s emphasis on design quality, environmental stewardship, and housing affordability with the practical realities of real estate investment and construction.

- Property Owner Workshops
- Individual stakeholder meetings including Eastside Fire & Rescue, Sammamish Police Department, Sammamish Plateau Water, Lake Washington School District, the Sammamish Chamber of Commerce, the Snoqualmie Tribe, and others.
- Presentations with Sammamish Rotary and Sammamish Chamber of Commerce.

² The Draft SEIS document is released and available concurrently with this Draft Plan, and is accessible on the City’s project webpage: <https://www.sammamish.us/projects/tcamendment/>

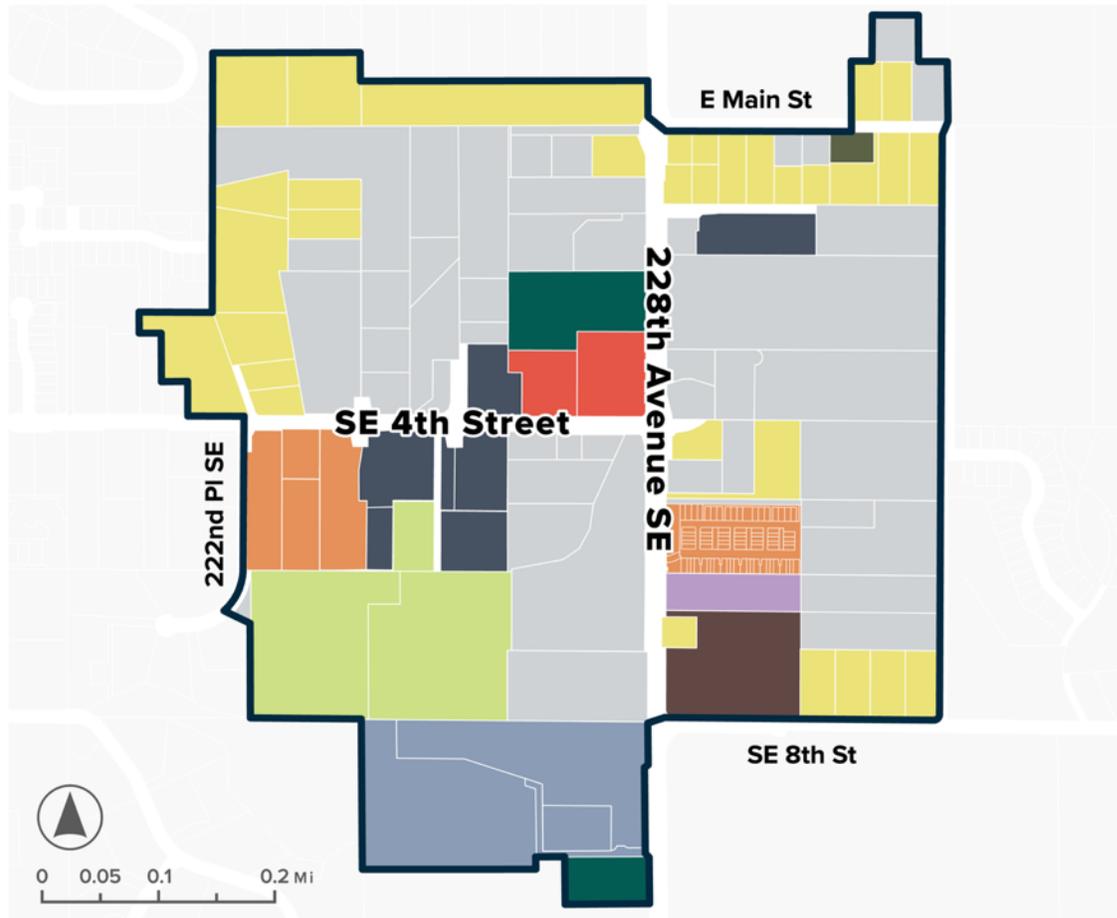
Existing Land Uses and Urban Form

After the adoption of the 2008 Town Center Plan, many properties that were once single-family homes or purely vacant have moved to higher densities and different uses. All of the land use conversions to date have occurred either along SE 4th Street, or along or near 228th Avenue Southeast. Medium-density housing, townhouses, and assisted living uses occupy lots to the east of 228th Avenue Southeast. Sammamish Village, located at the northwest corner of SE 4th Street and 228th Avenue Southeast, is the only retail development to date, transitioning to mixed-use apartment buildings moving west along SE 4th Street.

The transformation to lower-intensity residential uses continues at the western boundary of Town Center on SE 4th Street, stepping down to townhouse development with the recent groundbreaking of the Brownstones West project. Government services, church, school, and park uses remain unchanged.

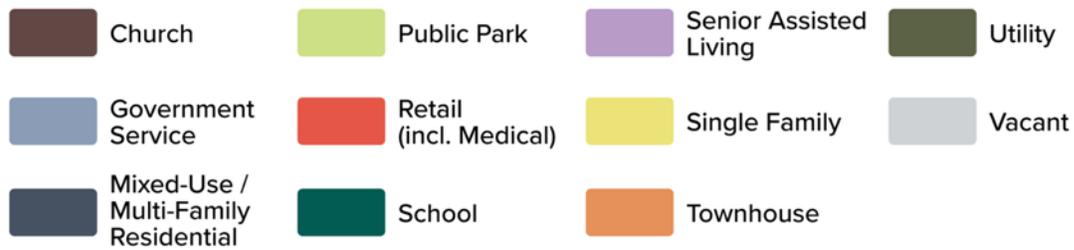
Figure 2 below depicts the pattern of existing land use in the Town Center subarea. Despite the new and anticipated development undergoing review, underutilized land still predominates Town Center today.

Figure 2. Town Center Existing and Anticipated Land Use³



Existing & Anticipated Land Use

Town Center



City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

³ Mixed-use and Townhouse development south of SE 4th Street is currently under construction/review.

Adjacent Uses

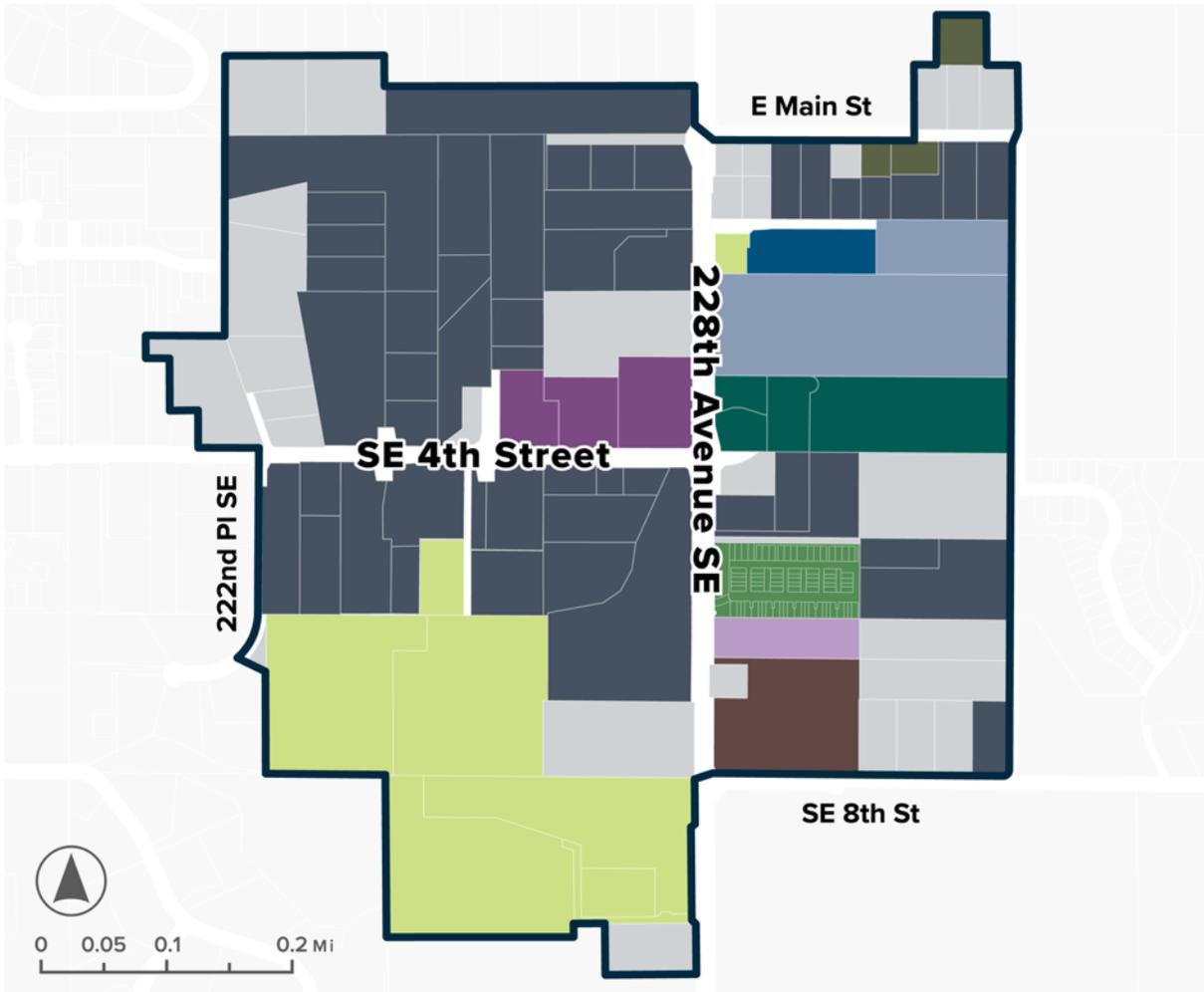
Beyond Town Center’s boundaries lie high school campuses such as Eastside Catholic School and Skyline High School, religious institutions, and other lower-density residential neighborhoods. These adjacencies highlight the importance of thoughtful transitions in building scale and land use, ensuring new construction within Town Center remains compatible with existing surrounding contexts. Notably, much of the area’s periphery includes large, partially forested lands with topographical constraints and informal pedestrian connections that could integrate into future Town Center trail systems or environmental buffers (see Development Constraints, pg. 15).

Ownership Patterns

Ownership patterns within the Town Center area have evolved considerably since the 2008 Plan’s adoption. At that time, the numerous, relatively small property ownerships in the area posed planning and regulatory difficulties that the 2008 Plan sought to overcome through extensive master planning processes. The intervening years have seen extensive assembly of these disparate parcels by Innovation Realty Partners, LLC through STCA and affiliated companies, which were organized in 2010 to undertake development within the Town Center through a sequence of coordinated projects. STCA has advanced a number of development projects and proposals in Town Center through various ventures and partnerships, including with Merrill Gardens. However, much of its property remains undeveloped.

Figure 3 below depicts the broad ownership pattern of property in the Town Center.

Figure 3. Town Center Ownership



Ownership

Town Center



City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

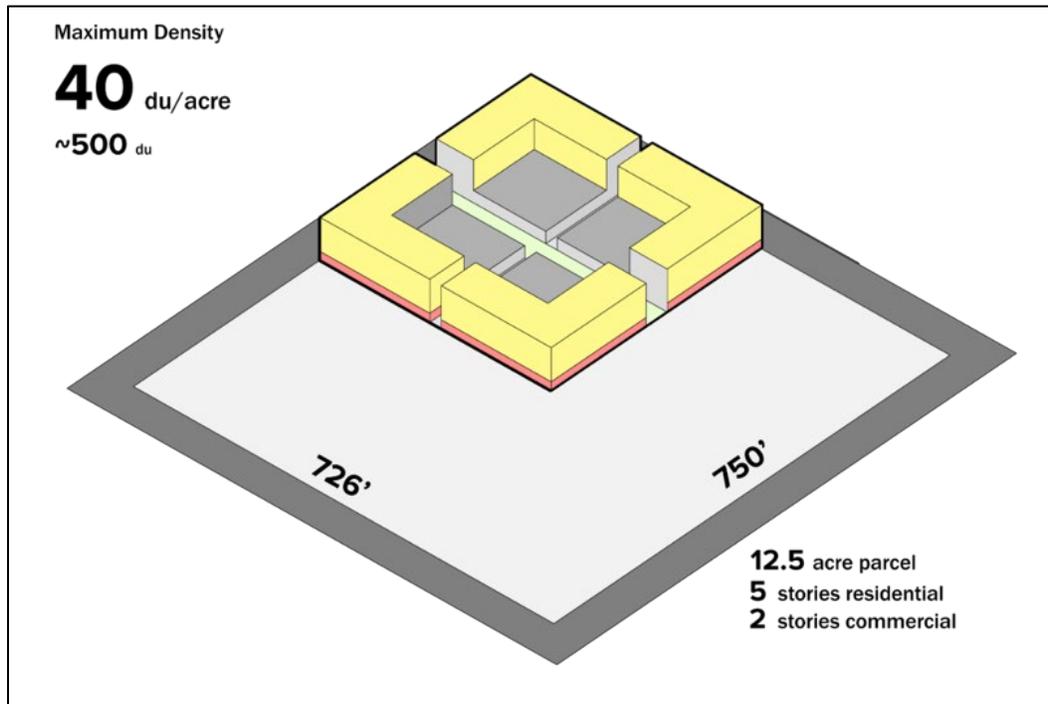
Code Audit Overview

The Town Center Code (Code), contained in Chapter 21.07 of the Sammamish Municipal Code, was developed following adoption of the 2008 Town Center Plan and the 2007 Final EIS, and took many of its regulatory cues directly from the 2008 Plan itself. Since then, planning goals for the City, region, and state have shifted, along with economic and real estate conditions that warrant an audit of the code and recommendations for better alignment with current conditions.

As part of the 2025 Update process, and in response to feedback and observations from City staff and property owners, a Code Audit was prepared that identifies key issues to be addressed as part of this amendment project. Overall, the Audit found that the current code inhibits the development envisioned by the community-led Town Center Plan. A selection of key takeaways from the Code Audit can be found below:

- The current Town Center Code is overly complex and relies on vague language that forces excessive discretion on City staff, resulting in inconsistent interpretations and outcomes.
- Overly prescriptive, area-wide residential and commercial allocations stifle practical development choices, making it hard to respond to market conditions and to achieve community goals.
- Incentive tools such as the Affordable Housing Bonus Pool or King County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) credits are either depleted or stymied, and the Unified Zone Development Plan (UZDP) adds complexity without clear connections to desired outcomes. Together this makes the development approval process costly, contentious, and uncertain.
- Numerous standards duplicate citywide regulations, rely on outdated illustrations and incomplete documents (such as the concepts found in the Town Center Infrastructure Plan), or simply fail to incorporate objective design standards required by recent legislation.
- Development standards (dimensional standards and density caps) are misaligned, and feasible building types do not match residential densities allowed in code. This is particularly true for smaller sites. Furthermore, residential allocations often clash with affordable housing production. See Figure 4 for a diagram that shows the amount of land required to construct a modern mixed-use building allowable under current development standards without the use of incentives. The building massing represented is similar to the Sky Apartments building in Town Center.

Figure 4. Code Audit Density Analysis Graphic



Framework, 2025

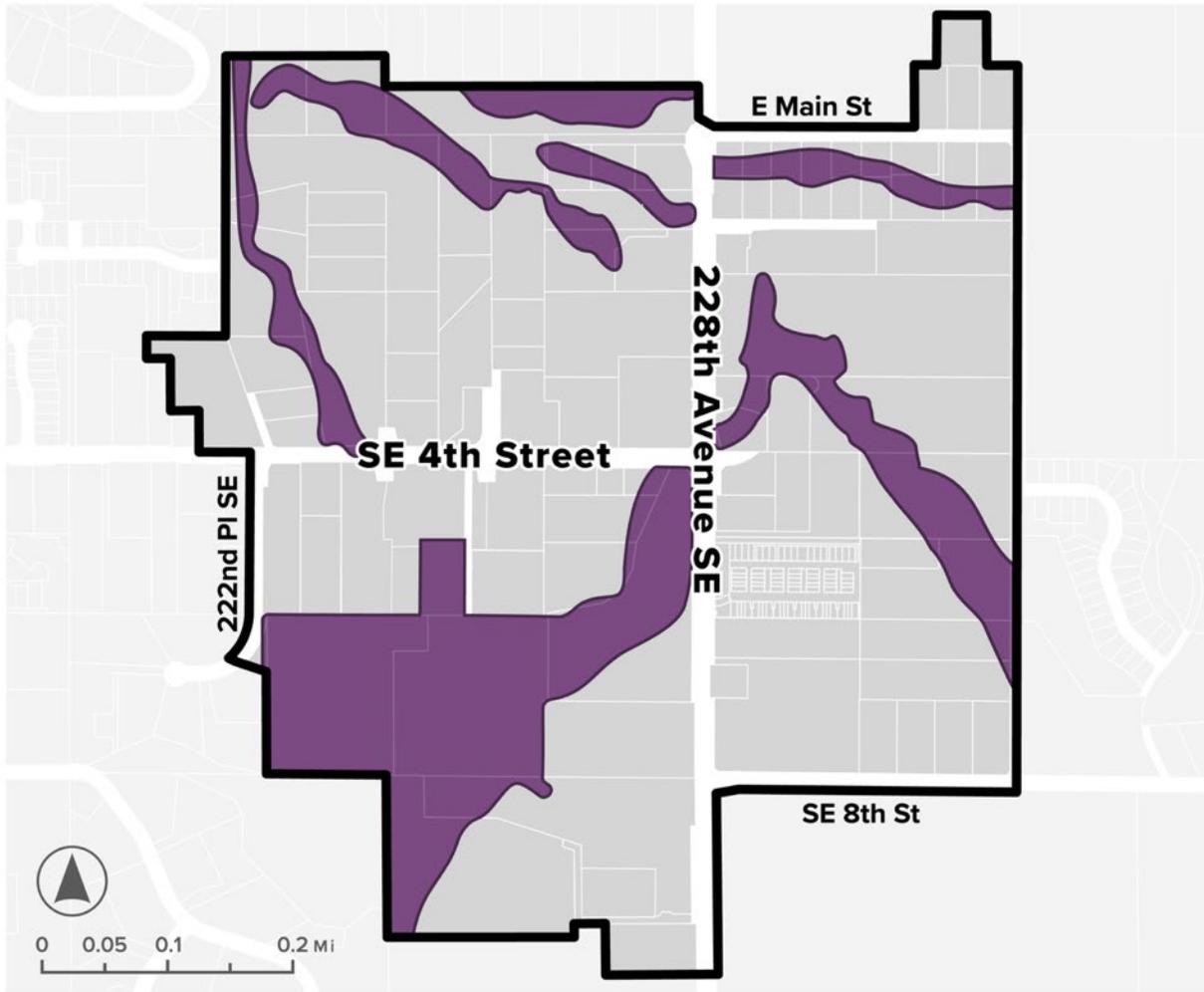
The Code Audit recommends a simplified, form-based approach that clarifies building form, street types, and site design. The Audit also urges an update to incentive programs to promote affordable housing, public open space, and feasible commercial uses. It also recommends that the City overhauls and simplifies the approval processes to remove ambiguities, given the disproportionate regulatory and administrative burden it places on staff resources. The full text of the Code Audit is available in [Appendix 3](#).

Development Constraints

Many natural constraints on undeveloped land exist that impact the feasibility of developing new street infrastructure and buildings, including wetlands, streams, and other critical areas found in Town Center. Furthermore, the steep slopes found in upland areas result in high construction costs for both street and building construction, often rendering one or the other infeasible, if not both. Land designated for public parks further limits the amount of pragmatically buildable land in Town Center. Altogether, these factors impact the extent and type of development that may be feasibly constructed. Updates made to the Town Center Plan and Code will take the protection of critical areas and open spaces into account, providing a framework for building a successful community in Town Center without major negative impacts to the quality of the environment.

The following map (Figure 5) illustrates the environmental constraints that will pose limitations to the development of new streets and buildings that support the goals of the Town Center Plan.

Figure 5. Environment Constraints on Development in Town Center



Potential Constraints

Town Center

 Constrained Areas, including:

- Wetlands
- Buffers
- Steep Slopes
- Parks

City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

Market and Economic Context

Many of the public benefits sought in Town Center are dependent upon private sector developers to fund, build, provide, or contribute. These public benefits include the provision of affordable housing units, as well as other public amenities and benefits including creating public open space, providing for certain mix of uses, designing projects with specific amenities or features, and creating new infrastructure such as streets and utility networks. Private development must be financially feasible to be greenlit, and in order to contribute so many required amenities, development must be even more profitable so it can divert potential profits towards affordable housing, street construction, or other public benefits.

As part of the consulting team for the Town Center amendment project, Kidder Mathews prepared a review of relevant real estate market conditions that will be useful in recalibrating provisions for affordable housing and other aspects of the 2025 Plan Update. The full memorandum, *Sammamish Town Center - Real Estate Market Conditions Summary*, is contained in [Appendix 4](#). Key takeaways are as follows:

- **Strong demographics and for-sale housing market** - Sammamish's continued population growth and high household incomes drive robust demand for single-family homes and townhomes. However, a regional housing crisis perpetuated by limited inventory and rising interest rates continues to push home prices even higher.
- **Mixed outlook for rentals** - While absorption and occupancy of existing apartments remain healthy, prevailing construction costs and high interest rates make new rental projects less feasible. Moreover, the gap between renting and owning is so large that most renters cannot easily become homeowners.
- **Growing need for specialized housing** - An aging population underpins strong demand for senior housing options (independent living, assisted living, memory care). Meanwhile, creating affordable housing depends on scarce subsidies and favorable conditions that have recently become more challenging to secure.
- **Retail performs best with visibility and access** - Demand for auto-oriented retail is solid, particularly along 228th Avenue Southeast. Though not unlimited, well-sited spaces can also accommodate medical office uses, which are an important segment of Sammamish's small, specialized office market.

Land Use

The Town Center Vision Statement calls for a Town Center that is a gathering place for social interaction, with well-designed mixed-use development, cultural and recreational opportunities, and a variety of housing types within a walkable, pleasantly landscaped setting. These objectives support the City's Comprehensive Plan goals, encouraging land use patterns that promote walkability and diversity and reinforce a sense of community. This 2025 Update to the Town Center Plan seeks to realign the plan goals with the development code itself, in response to the many new challenges and legislative mandates faced by the City.

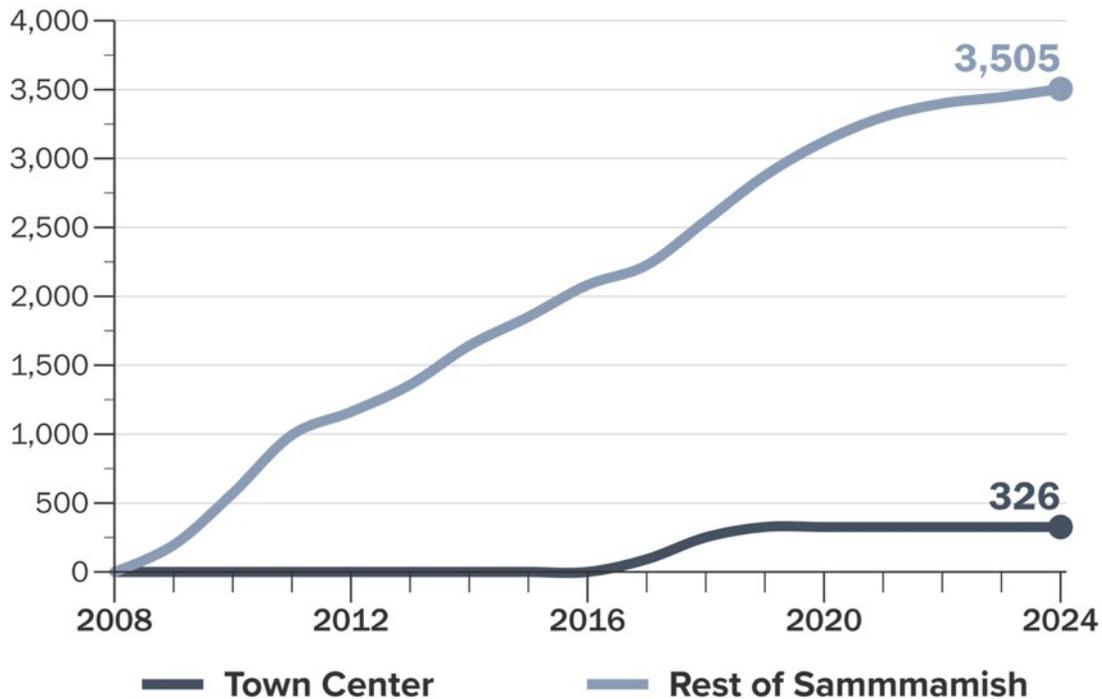
Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

In the years since the adoption of the original Town Center Plan, development has brought significant new land uses that are generally aligned with the Plan's vision. The Sammamish Community & Aquatic Center/YMCA has been added to the municipal campus, and mixed-use developments have brought housing, stores, service establishments, and office spaces to the area. Since the Town Center Plan was first adopted in 2008, 326 housing units and 134,000 square feet of commercial space has been built in Town Center, with 38 additional townhomes currently underway in the Brownstones West development.

Looking ahead, a series of additional projects are either undergoing review, preparing for construction, or are fully underway. These include 730 proposed housing units (inclusive of the 38 townhomes currently undergoing construction in Brownstones West), assisted living for seniors, and an additional 100,000 square feet of commercial space. Other projects are in the earlier stages of public introduction and design.

However, a substantial amount of land in Town Center remains undeveloped or underdeveloped relative to its currently zoned capacity. At the same time, growth across the rest of Sammamish has far outpaced development in Town Center itself (See Figure 6). This current reality is in stark contrast to the original goals of the 2008 Plan, which held that Town Center would be the epicenter of future growth in Sammamish, protecting Sammamish's natural beauty and ecological function from further encroachment by low-density single-family development.

Figure 6. Sammamish Housing Production in the City of Sammamish and in Town Center



WA Office of Financial Management (OFM), City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025⁴

This mismatch between stated goals and actual outcomes can be traced back to a complex and overwrought development code and permitting process, with diffuse land ownership further complicating the path towards major development in Town Center.⁵ Instead, development projects gravitated towards Sammamish's residential areas, where zoning regulations were minimal and single-family construction remained highly profitable. Ultimately, the original goals of the 2008 Plan remain unfulfilled, and the resulting land use patterns arising since that time negatively contribute to many items of collective concern, including traffic, stormwater, and infrastructure issues.

While much of Town Center was once much more sparsely developed, with some residential and agricultural uses and a mosaic of parcels and owners, in recent years land ownership has seen significant consolidation. The 2025 Update establishes a new land use regulating plan that acknowledges this new reality, aligning existing development standards with housing and building types that are financially feasible and consistent with those already in Town Center, while simultaneously adding a middle housing district in alignment with HB 1110 around the district's

⁴ Housing data for the City of Sammamish comes from OFM estimates (current and historical), and accounts for the annexation effects from the Klahanie area using OFM data cited in the City's 2014 "Comprehensive Fiscal Study of the Klahanie Area PAA." Housing data for Town Center are derived from permitting documents, and subtracted from the OFM estimates of the wider city to avoid duplication.

⁵ Many of these issues are detailed in the Code Audit, located in [Appendix 3](#).

periphery.⁶ Additional changes to the Town Center Development Code will ensure that new development is better coordinated to realize the adopted vision for Town Center, incorporating requirements for the integration of landscape and trees, the design of safe and walkable streets, street frontages, green infrastructure, and solar access.

Existing and Planned Land Use and Development

The total current amount and distribution of development in Town Center is summarized in Figure 7. Relative to the current planned development capacity, a modest amount of housing has been constructed along with commercial development along 228th Avenue Southeast. Considerable expansion in housing, including affordable housing, senior living, commercial, and school development, may be anticipated, as a series of proposals are at various stages of submission, review, and permitting that could add another 700 housing units and 100,000 square feet of commercial space.

Figure 7. Existing and Planned Development in Town Center

| Project | Total Units | Market-Rate | Affordable (80% AMI)⁷ | Affordable (50% AMI)⁷ |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Built | 364 | 306 | 58 | 0 |
| Samm Apartments | 92 | 74 | 18 | 0 |
| Sammamish Townhomes | 75 | 68 | 7 | 0 |
| SKY Sammamish | 159 | 129 | 30 | 0 |
| Brownstones West (Under Construction) | 38 | 35 | 3 | 0 |
| Proposed | 692 | 612 | 80 | 0 |
| Brownstones East | 48 | 45 | 3 | 0 |
| STC Phase I | 300 | 226 | 74 | 0 |
| STC Phase II | 344 | 341 | 3 | 0 |
| Grand Total | 1056 | 924 | 132 | 0 |

City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

The existing and anticipated land use in Town Center (Figure 2) is a mix of mostly low-intensity residential uses that existed before the Town Center Plan in 2008, recent development, and development in the pipeline that has received permit approval. A townhouse project (Brownstones

⁶ While the City of Sammamish did establish a middle housing overlay for all residential zones as part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update process, implementation was held back in Town Center for evaluation and inclusion in this Plan and Code Update.

⁷ AMI, or Area Median Income, is the midpoint of the income distribution of all households within a defined region. A household making 80% AMI would therefore have an annual income equal to 80% of the median income for that region. This also varies by household size. In King County, a family of four at the 80% AMI threshold would have an annual household income of \$110,950; at 50% AMI, a family of four would make \$75,350. A single person at 80% AMI would make \$77,700; at 50% AMI, they would make \$52,700. [\[link\]](#)

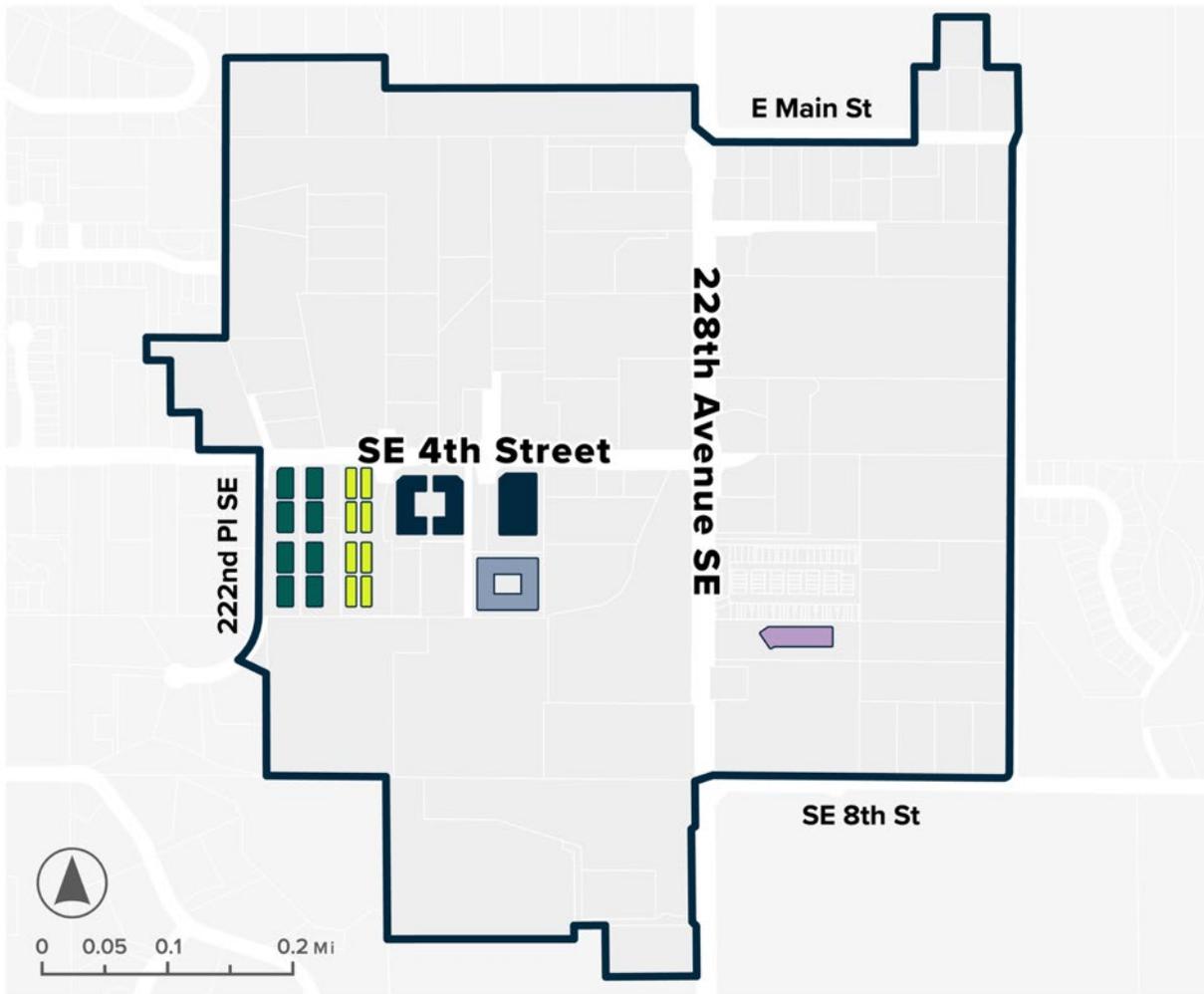
West) is currently under construction, and mixed-use development has been entitled in the core but has not moved forward to construction. Several projects are planned but have not moved to the construction phase, in part due to challenges with real estate market conditions compounded by limitations and barriers in the Town Center Code. Other sites that remain undeveloped are not able to take advantage of any further development incentives, as all have been either exhausted, like the Affordable Housing Bonus Pool, or already allocated, like the TDR Credits through the City's Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with King County.

Figure 8 shows the locations for the five planned projects under construction or in some form of development review in Town Center. These projects are:

- **Aegis of Sammamish** - One four-story building with 86,000 square feet of assisted living, memory care facilities with 94 residential units.
- **Southwest Quadrant (STC Phase I)** - Four six-story mixed-use buildings with 82,000 square feet of commercial and 348 residential units, including apartments, senior living units, and townhouses.
- **Brownstones East** - Part of the Southwest Quadrant, these 48 townhomes help transition to the higher-density mixed-use community proposed for the rest of the STC Phase I project.
- **Brownstones West** - 38 attached single-family townhouses.
- **STC Phase II** - One six-story mixed-use building with 18,000 square feet of commercial space and 344 residential units.

The proposed building footprints shown in Figure 8 are simplified forms based on available plans for proposed projects as of Spring 2025. Implementation of these plans or final layouts may vary.

Figure 8. Proposed Development in Town Center



Planned Development

Town Center



Aegis



Brownstones East



Brownstones West



Southwest Quadrant (STC Phase I)



STC Phase II

Recent development in Town Center such as the six-story mixed-use Sky Apartments building (See Figure 9) represents the approximate intensity of development intended by the 2008 Plan for the core of Town Center. Updated development regulations in the highest intensity areas of Town Center will maintain the same height limit of 70 feet (approximately 6 stories), but will shift to form-based standards to allow for more development flexibility and better accommodate the community's desired increase in affordable housing production. Updated incentives for development could allow for an additional 15 feet of height, bringing the tallest buildings in the heart of Town Center to approximately 8 stories (85 feet). For example, a project like Heartwood Apartments (Figure 10) as an all-affordable-housing, mass-timber building represents the types of housing projects the City would like to see in Town Center. These projects would qualify for additional height under affordable housing incentives.

Figure 9. Sky Apartments in Sammamish Town Center



Sky Apartments by MainStreet, 2024

Figure 10. Heartwood Apartments in Seattle



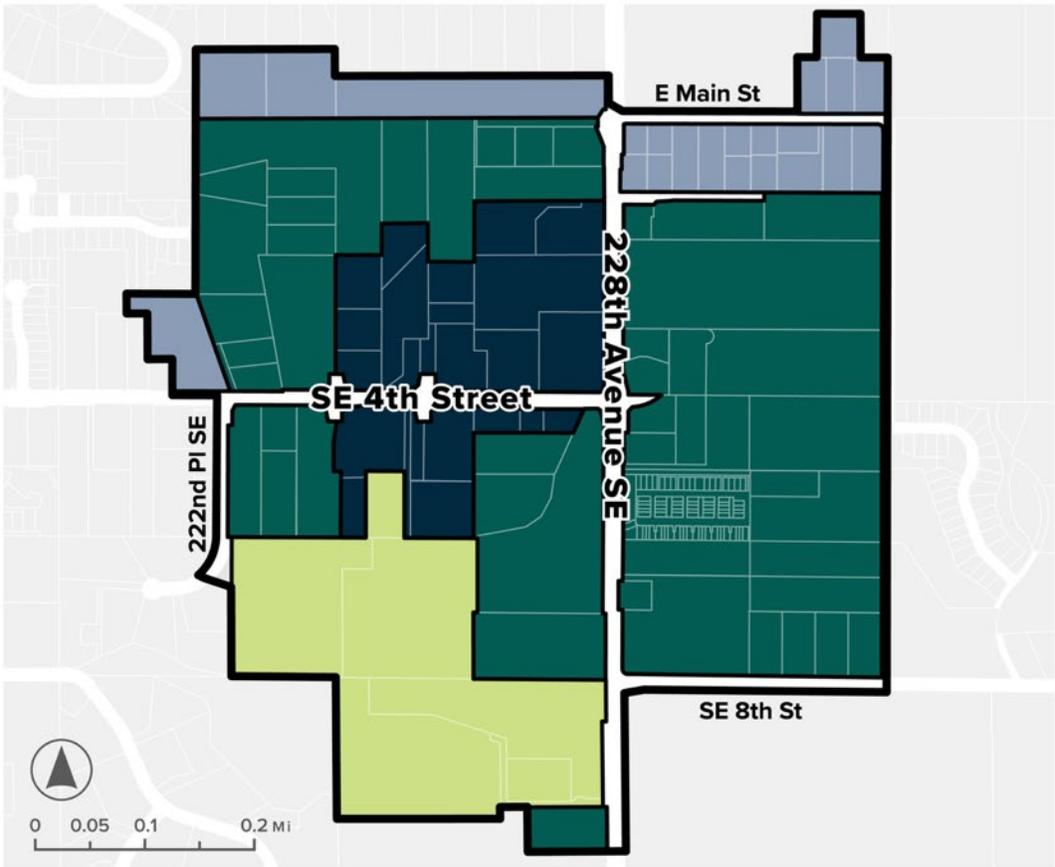
Atelier Jones, 2024

Strategy

Updated Land Use Concept & Regulating Plan

The land use concept shown in Figure 11 establishes three proposed districts in Town Center: the Urban Core district, Urban Mixed district, and Garden Mixed Residential district.

Figure 11. Land Use Concept



Regulating Plan

Proposed Districts

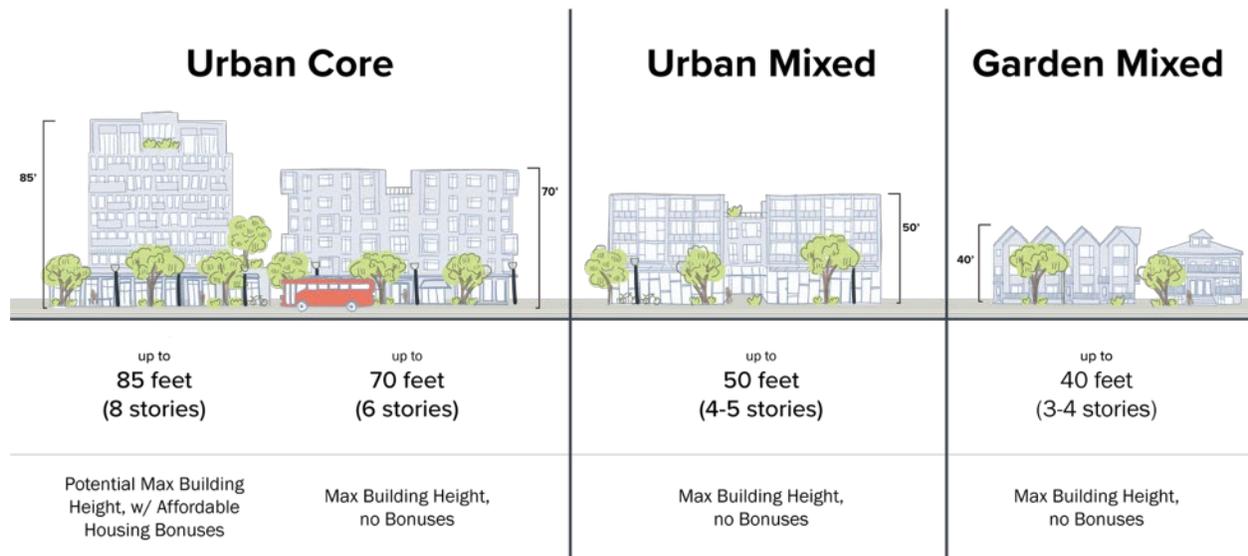


Framework, 2025

The Urban Core district functions similarly to the previous TC-A1 zone, and allows the greatest development intensity, prioritizing mixed-use development and allowing buildings up to 70 feet high by right, and up to 85 feet high through affordable-housing incentives. The Urban Mixed district is less intense, allowing buildings up to 50 feet high and accommodating both mixed-used and residential buildings, as well as limited commercial development. Finally, the Garden Mixed district only allows residential buildings, and is focused primarily on middle housing types including low-rise apartment buildings, multi-plex units, and attached townhouses.

The Land Use Development Intensity graphic (Figure 12) illustrates the relative sizes and general forms that characterize each district, and highlights the transitional development pattern that steps down in intensity when moving outward from Town Center’s Urban Core.

Figure 12. Land Use Development Intensity



City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

A short summary of each zoning district appears below.

Urban Core

Figure 13. Urban Core District Intensity



The Urban Core is intended to be the heart of Sammamish. The highest level of development intensity will be confined to the Urban Core area, and for residential projects, mixed-use-ready development will be a required component.

Urban Mixed

Figure 14. Urban Mixed District Intensity



Framework, 2025

Most of the land area in Town Center is designated as Urban Mixed. This is also the district where the majority of redevelopable land exists. Midrise buildings up to 50 feet in height are allowed in the Urban Mixed district, with either mixed-use or solely residential buildings permitted. Also appearing here is middle housing development.

Garden Mixed

Figure 15. Garden Mixed District Intensity

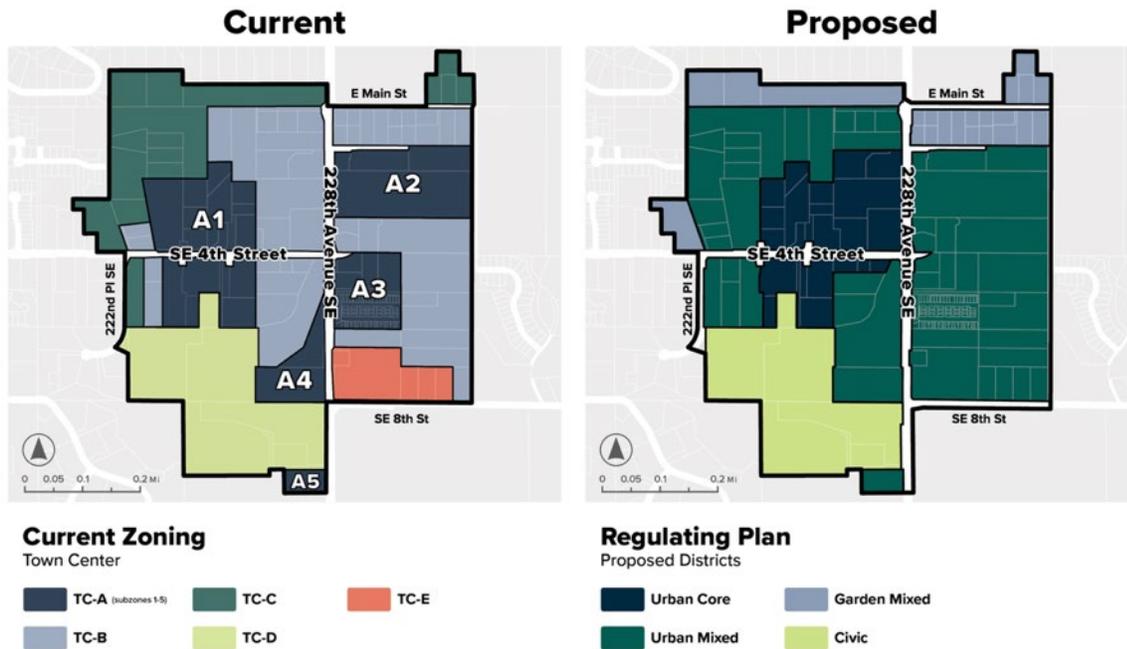


Framework, 2025

The Garden Mixed district appears on the northern and western edges of Town Center, easing the active and visual transition towards other adjacent neighborhoods.

This three-district approach distinguishes itself from prior iterations of the Code by greatly simplifying Town Center’s zoning. The current zoning scheme, shown in Figure 16, consists of five zones and five sub-zones, totaling nine distinct regulating zones in Town Center.

Figure 16. Town Center Current vs Proposed Zoning



City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

Current zones make use of varying high-level regulations, complex and conditional relationships for allowable uses, and shared development capacity pools for the whole area in conjunction with development limits on individual zoning districts. The 2025 Update aims to greatly reduce this level of complexity, and provide clarity and predictability for both private developers and the public at large.

Envisioned Land Use Pattern

The Town Center's updated land use development pattern consists of a principal mixed-use center on the level plateau north and south of Southeast 4th Street, west of 228th Avenue Southeast. This Urban Core area will emphasize pedestrian-oriented retail on the ground floor, residential and office uses, and structured parking. Adjacent to the Urban Core district is the Urban Mixed district, consisting of smaller mixed-use and multi-family buildings of three to five stories, ample open space, and an emphasis on pedestrian connectivity to the Core. Lower intensity "missing middle" housing, including low-rise apartment buildings, multiplex housing ranging from triplexes to six-plexes, and townhomes, will be developed in the Garden Area at the north end of Town Center.

Civic uses, including City Hall, the library, and the Community and Aquatic Center, will remain at their locations adjacent to the Sammamish Commons, with retail services allowed near the intersection of 228th Avenue Southeast & Southeast 8th Street intersection and other facilities located just north of the Commons.

The Urban Core area west of 228th Avenue Southeast will prioritize retail-oriented commercial and mixed-use development that supports and creates active people-friendly streetscapes and community gathering areas. Mixed-use areas east of 228th Avenue Southeast in the Urban Mixed district will emphasize complementary localized retail to support the office uses. The updated development regulations will address specific ways to accomplish these goals to ensure a specific and appropriate mix of uses.

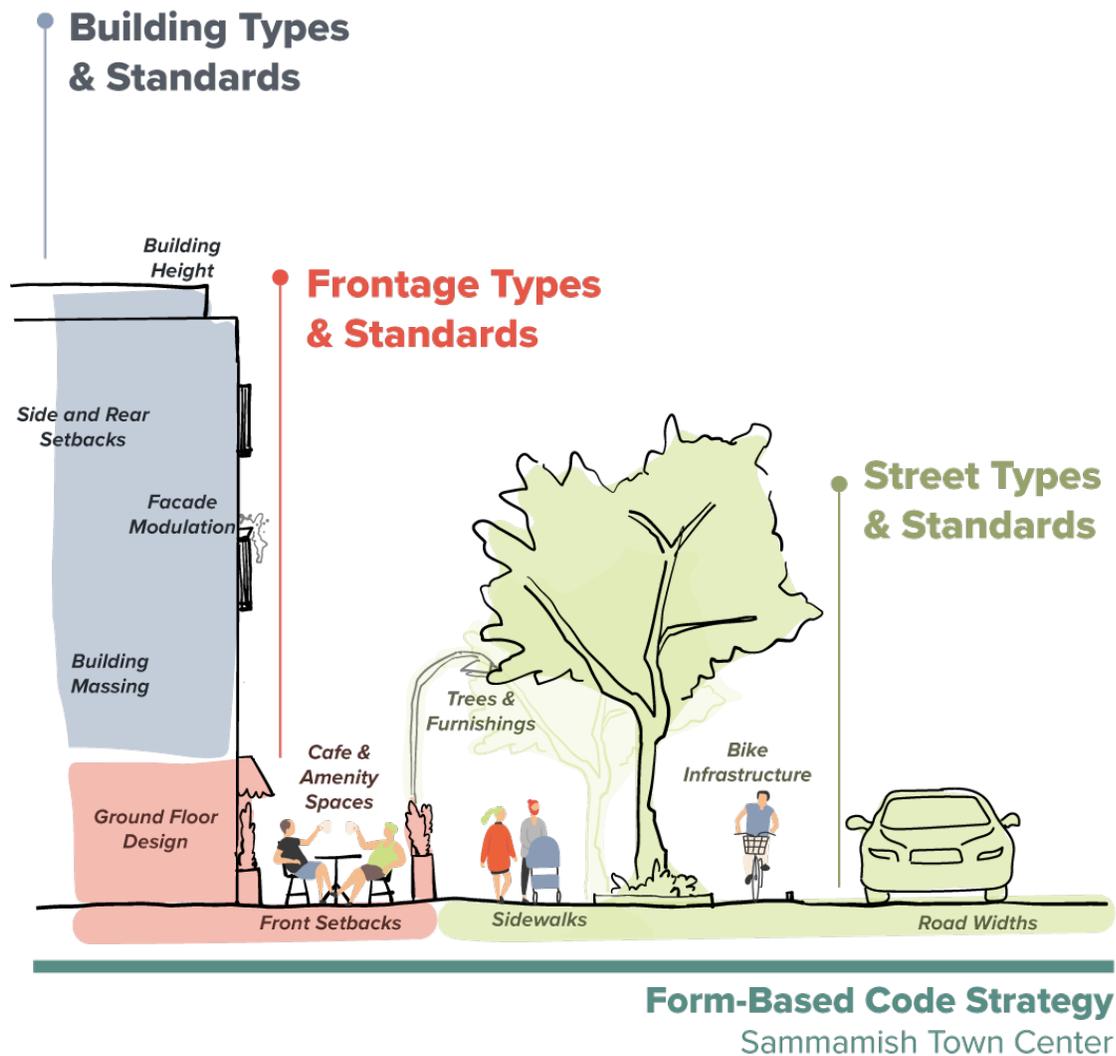
All areas of Town Center would permit public schools or civic structures for public benefit, following the required review process for such projects. Civic uses west of 228th Avenue Southeast must complement the retail core as determined by development regulations and the applicable approval process.

Code Updates

Town Center’s updated land use concept will be implemented through a new form-based code, emphasizing the overall form and quality of development over the prior regulatory framework of prescriptive density caps and more rigid use standards. Figure 17 highlights the elements of a form-based code, including the development frontage, street types, and building standards and types.

While a standard form-based code does not directly regulate uses like traditional zoning does, Town Center will employ a “hybrid” form-based code. This hybrid form-based code will approach uses from a broad lens, simplifying use categories greatly while including a list of prohibited uses. Permitted frontage and building types will vary based on the district and street type for a given property or development project.

Figure 17. Components of a Form-Based Code Strategy



Framework, 2025

Frontage Types & Standards

Frontage types are used to regulate development, and permitted types vary based on the street type and street-level uses (street types are summarized in the Mobility & Streets section of the Plan). A summary of the frontage types that will be permitted in Town Center follows below, accompanied by conceptual drawings to illustrate the elements that differentiate the various frontages.

Shopfront/Linear

A shopfront or linear frontage is most appropriate for active street-level uses such as retail or restaurants, and typically includes no setback from the sidewalk, as shown in the illustration below, or at most a modest setback of up to 10 feet.

Figure 18. Linear Frontage



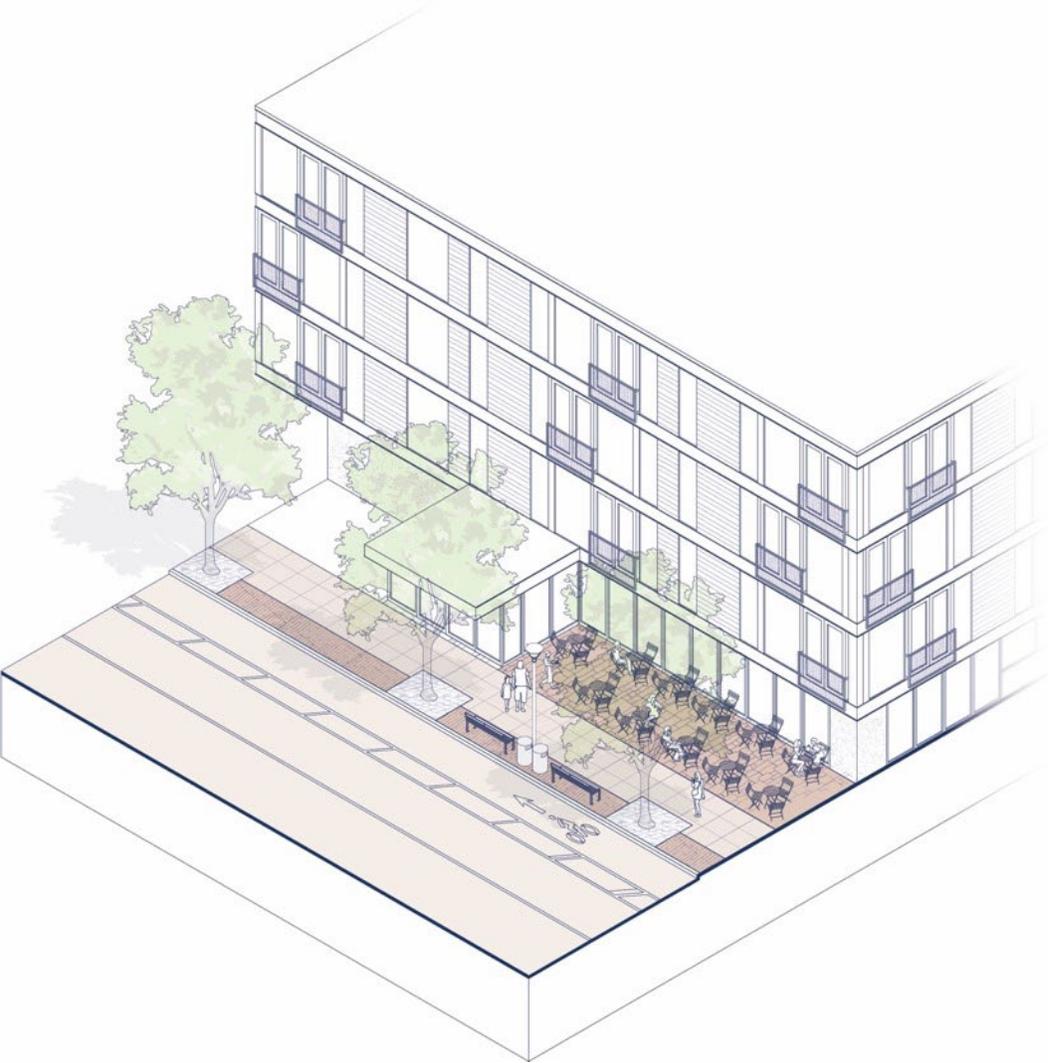
Framework, 2025



Plaza

A Plaza frontage works best when combined with an active street-level use such as retail, restaurants, and cultural uses. The plaza frontage should include a variety of design elements and programming to entice passersby to linger, including seating, artistic lighting, pavers, landscaping, and interactive features. The plaza shown in Figure 19 below has a depth of 18' from the sidewalk.

Figure 19. Plaza Frontage

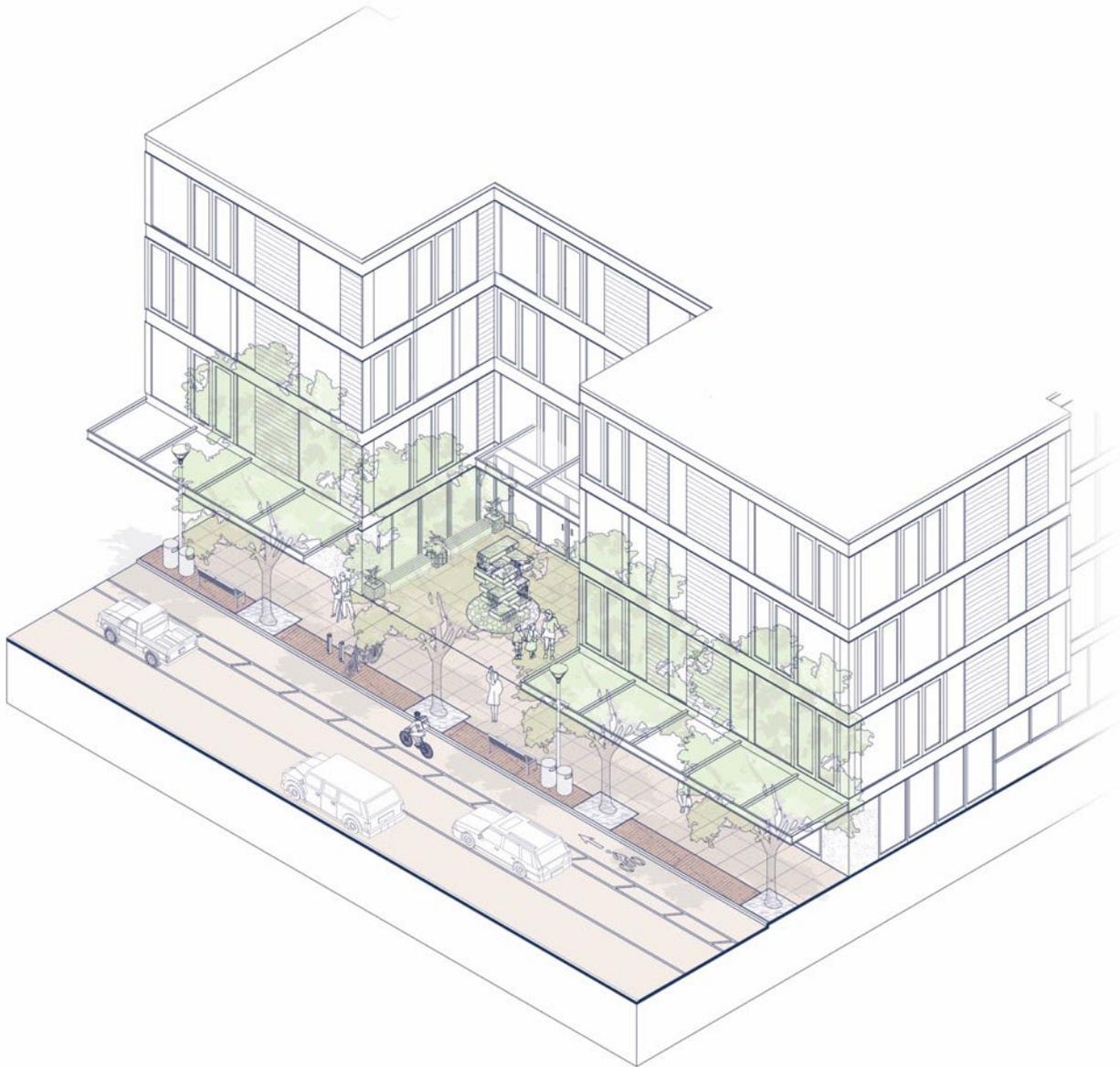


Framework, 2025

Forecourt

A forecourt frontage is typically associated with street-level residential or office uses, and is characterized by a central courtyard open to the street.

Figure 20. Forecourt Frontage



Framework, 2025

Landscape

A landscape frontage is typically associated with residential, office, or civic uses at the street level, and includes landscaped areas with plantings and street trees that buffer the building from the street.

Figure 21. Landscape Frontage

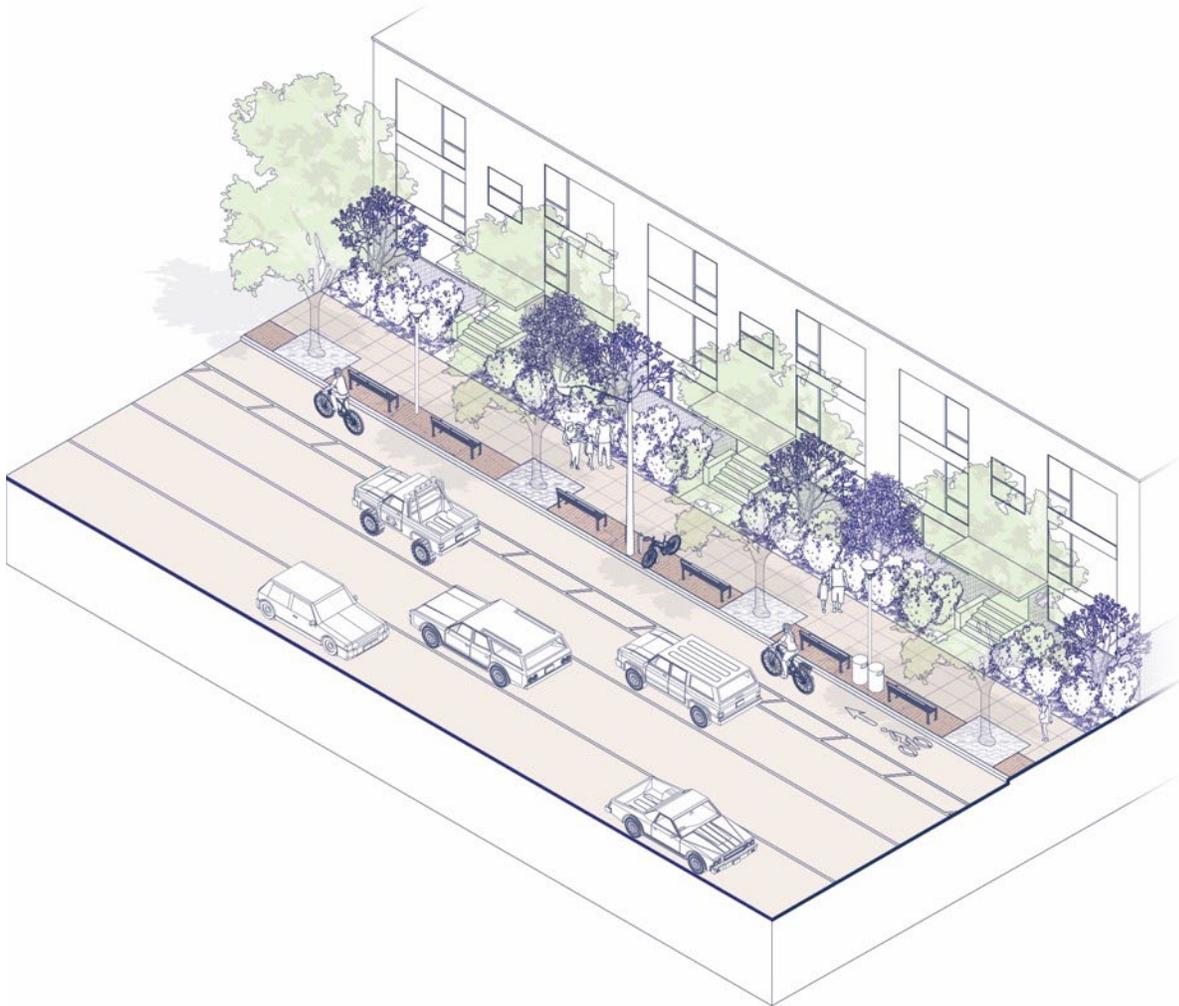


Framework, 2025

Porch/Stoop/Terrace

A porch, stoop, or terrace frontage is associated with small-scale ground-related residential uses where each unit has direct access to the street.

Figure 22. Porch / Stoop / Terrace Frontage

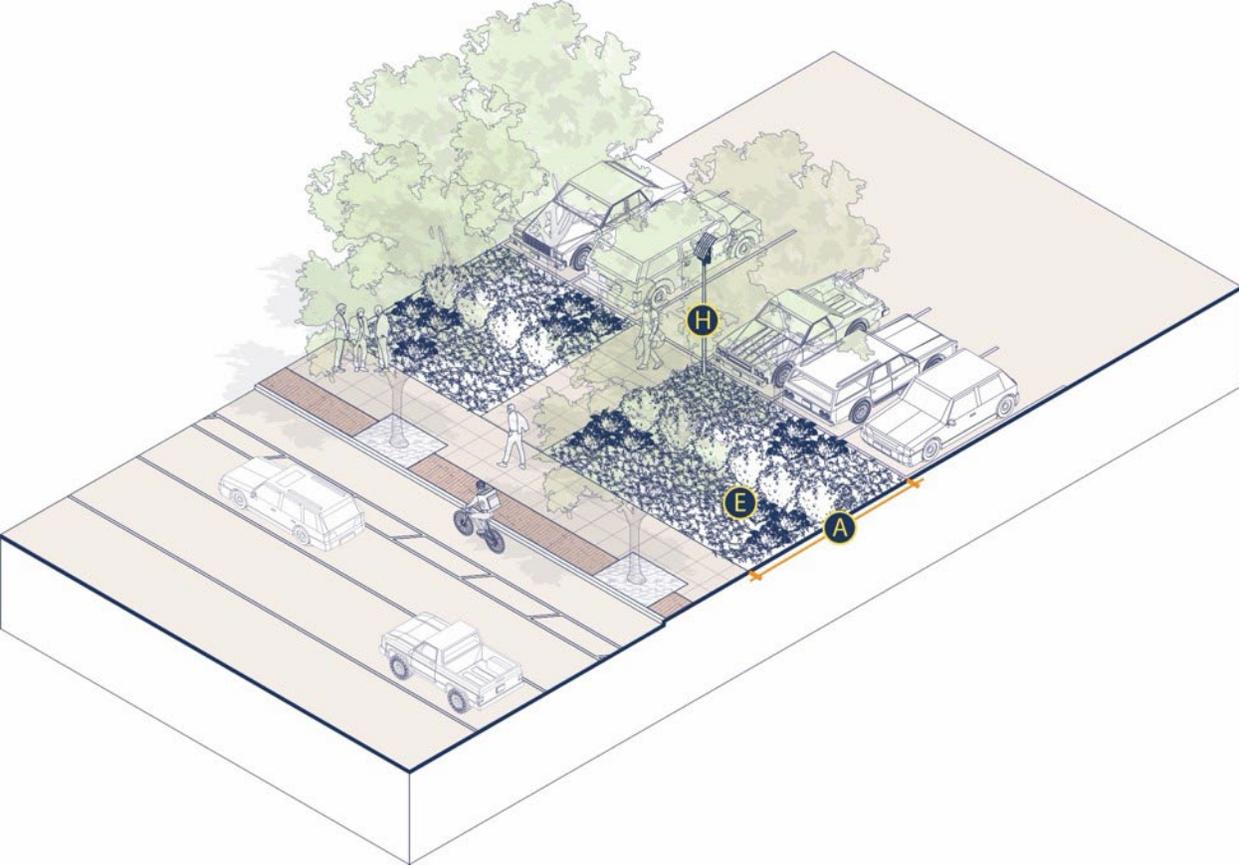


Framework, 2025

Parking

Parking frontages are associated with surface or structured parking as a street-level use, and may include a setback from the street with street trees and landscaping. Updates to the code will aim to minimize excessive surface parking, particularly in the higher-intensity areas of Town Center, and provide incentives for the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

Figure 23. Parking Frontage



Framework, 2025

Goals and Policies

The 2008 Town Center Plan included many Goals, Policies, and Recommended Implementation Actions in each element, to the extent that oftentimes the Plan resembled a comprehensive plan more than a subarea plan. This approach, while thorough, leads to both repetitiveness and opportunities for accidental contradiction when taking into account other City plans and policies. To enhance their clarity, the Goals, Policies, and Recommended Implementation Actions found in the 2025 Update have been updated to advance Town Center-specific outcomes, not to rehash City policy that already impacts the area, nor restate current regulations that already govern the Town Center such as Sammamish’s Critical Area Ordinance.

Other City plans that provide direction to Town Center include:

- The 2024 Sammamish Comprehensive Plan
- The 2024 Transportation Master Plan
- The 2024 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan
- The 2023 Climate Action Plan
- The 2023 Housing Diversification Toolkit
- The 2019 Urban Forest Management Plan
- The 2016 Storm and Surface Water Comprehensive Plan
- The 2025 *Draft* Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

Land Use Goals and Policies

Goal TLU-1: Promote development that respects Town Center's natural surroundings and sense of place while allowing for a range of building scales - from intimate, human-scaled design in peripheral areas to higher-density, mixed-use development in the Urban Core.

TLU-1.1 New development should be located and designed to reduce impacts to residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Town Center.

TLU-1.2 Access to 228th Avenue Southeast should be managed to ensure safe multimodal circulation, increasing opportunities for pedestrians, cyclists, and those using transit, while preserving neighborhood quality.

TLU-1.3 Parking impacts should be minimized by centralizing parking and using structured, underground, or shared facilities.

TLU-1.4 Design standards direct new development to achieve a high level of quality, promoting human scale and landscape integration in public realms while allowing for higher development intensity in designated core areas.

TLU-1.5 Landscaping and natural area retention should be an essential part of new development.

TLU-1.6 Utilize multiple integrated measures of the preferred storm water management techniques as the standard within the Town Center.

Goal TLU-2: Establish a land use pattern that increases social interaction, creates central gathering places, and encourages walkability, diversity, sustainability, and creativity.

TLU-2.1 Locate Town Center's highest-intensity development in the Urban Core area north of the Sammamish Commons, transitioning to mid- and lower-intensity development moving outwards from this centralized core.

TLU-2.2a Mixed-use areas in the Urban Core should emphasize office-oriented commercial uses with complementary localized retail to support the office uses. The development regulations should address specific ways to accomplish these goals to ensure a specific and appropriate mix of uses.

TLU-2.2b Mixed-use areas in the Urban Mixed area should emphasize local retail-oriented commercial use that supports and creates active people-friendly streetscapes and community gathering areas.

TLU-2.2c All areas of Town Center should permit public schools or civic structures for public benefit after the required review for such projects. Civic uses should be complementary to the retail core as determined by development regulations and the approval process.

TLU-2.3 A central Town Square should be provided in the Civic District, drawing residents from Town Center and across Sammamish for a wide variety of community and cultural activity.

TLU-2.4 Town Center should be interconnected with a well-planned and designed system of sidewalks, trails, and pathways.

TLU-2.5 Opportunities for art and cultural activities should be focused in the Urban Core and Urban Mixed areas.

Goal TLU-3: Provide a full range of commercial, recreational, cultural, and educational services that provide for the daily needs of all Sammamish residents.

TLU-3.1 Town Center retail uses should primarily serve Sammamish residents and not act as a regional destination. A mid-sized grocery store and a theater are acceptable, but “big box” retailers are not appropriate.

TLU-3.2 Public facilities and amenities should be highly accessible uses, with services and amenities located primarily adjacent to or near the Sammamish Commons.

Goal TLU-4: Encourage employment and business development opportunities in the Town Center.

TLU-4.1 Allow a wide range of business and services opportunities to facilitate an eminently walkable and welcoming community hub. Examples may include:

- Local cafes, specialty retail, and restaurants
- Healthcare services
- Professional services
- Institutional facilities
- Small- to medium-scale grocers
- Lodging and hotels

TLU-4.2 Development should take into account the needs of local businesses and employees, including remote workers, home-based businesses, and entrepreneurs. New development should integrate modern internet infrastructure such as high-speed fiber internet, and new mixed-use and office buildings in particular should consider coworking or flexible workspaces to create opportunities for gathering and knowledge sharing.

Goal TLU-5: Develop a regulatory program and other implementation measures that are timely, flexible, predictable, fair to all, and that result in superior development.

TLU-5.1 The plan should include an implementation strategy that provides a clear path to realizing the goals of the plan.

TLU-5.2 Recognizing that market dynamics shift over time, the implementation strategy (including development regulations) should afford a reasonable degree of flexibility while addressing important public policy issues and citywide objectives.

TLU-5.3 The implementation strategy should address transition strategies such as landscape buffers and setbacks to mitigate environmental impacts, including noise and light pollution, within the planning area.

TLU-5.4 The regulatory system for directing new development should include a collaborative planning process that encourages property owners and the City to work together for mutual benefit, without compromising on the objectives of the Town Center Plan.

TLU-5.5 The City should implement a hybrid form-based code, directing development in a way that is consistent with the Town Center Plan and the community's vision, while also eliminating any unjustified restrictions or limitations on new development.

Recommended Implementation Actions

1. **Adopt a Town Center Form-Based Code.** This Code will amend the existing regulatory scheme to address current issues identified through the Code Audit process and through community and stakeholder engagement. The updated code will include:
 - a. Simplification of the number of districts (zones and sub-zones) within Town Center.

- b. Establishment of permanent street design standards.
 - c. Regulation of street frontages, building types, and broad categories of uses.
 - d. Implementation of sustainable development and design standards that simplify property owners' approaches to development.
2. **Evaluate existing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs.** To date, the TDR programs have done little to advance the construction of varied housing types across Town Center. The City should improve the effectiveness of the current programs and provisions to determine the best way to integrate this tool moving forward.
3. **Update the Town Center Code to comply with HB 1110.** The following changes should be made to the Town Center Code for consistency with HB 1110:
- a. Remove single-family detached housing as an allowable form of new development in Town Center.
 - b. Create a new Garden Mixed Residential District that prioritizes middle housing.
 - c. Assess procedures (such as the UZDP process) for modification, or for removal and replacement, to simplify and speed up the development approval process while maintaining meaningful public outreach.
 - d. Remove density limits and update affordable housing requirements for new development. Track residential unit counts so as to not exceed the limits imposed by the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) SEIS.
4. **Pursue Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Regional Growth Center designation.** Per the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the City should pursue PSRC Regional Growth Center designation for Town Center, as it is the primary center for planned residential and economic development in the city. This status prioritizes Town Center for consideration in funding allocated through the PSRC's planning processes, including grants for transit improvements, multimodal network upgrades, and infrastructure projects to support housing and job growth.
5. **Pursue a Planned Action Ordinance for Town Center.** A Planned Action Ordinance (PAO) will streamline SEPA review for projects conforming to the updated Town Center Plan and Code. By setting clear thresholds (e.g. maximum dwelling units, traffic generation, and/or environmental standards), future site-specific proposals that meet these conditions can proceed with minimal additional SEPA documentation. This approach increases predictability for developers, facilitates timely project approvals, and ensures strong environmental protections remaining in place through mitigation measures determined by the City.

Housing

Housing choices and increased affordability are essential components of the City’s vision for the Town Center. Sammamish is currently one of the least affordable cities in King County, in terms of housing cost, and it contains one of the lowest ratios of multi-family housing to single-family housing in the county. Consistent with trends throughout the region and nation, there is strong interest in providing opportunities for people to live in the Town Center, where they can be within walking distance of shops, restaurants, parks, and other amenities. Ultimately, the desired amount, mix, and configuration of housing in the Town Center will be shaped by the community’s environmental, vehicular circulation, economic, social, and community character goals and challenges.

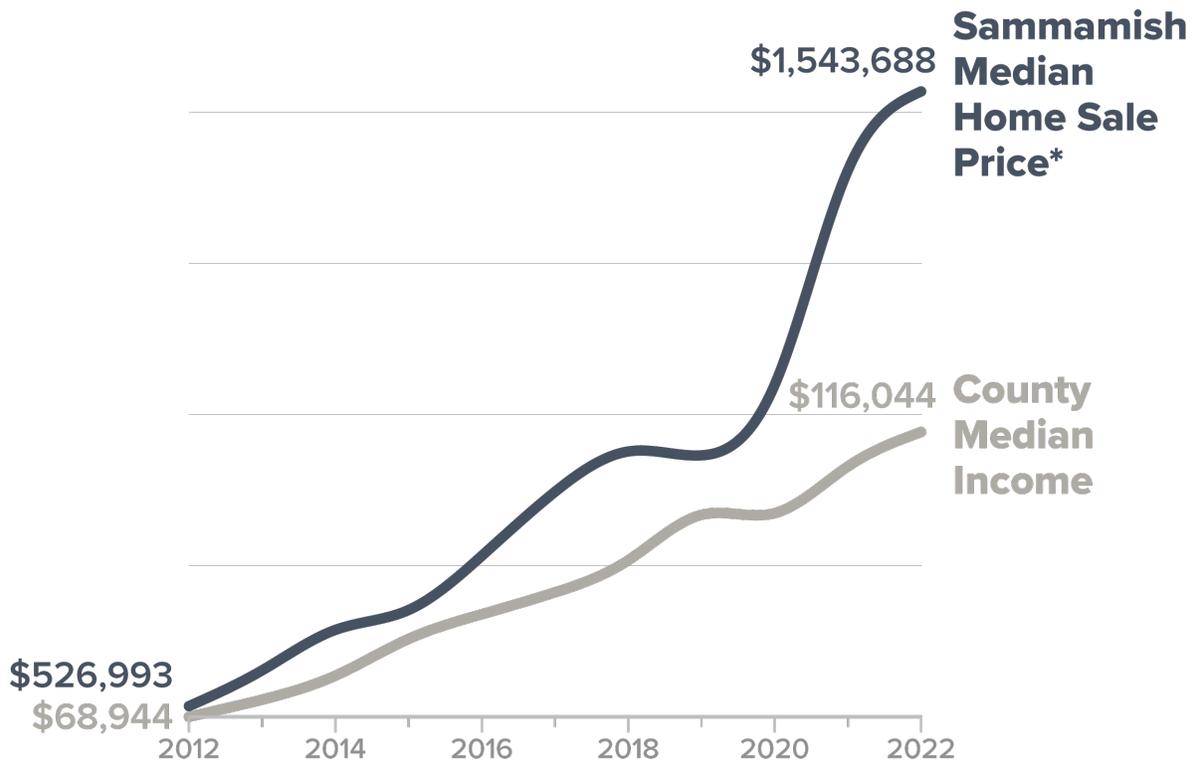
Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

Sammamish’s housing stock is relatively young, suburban, expensive, and predominantly single-family. Recent Census data estimates that 83.4 percent of all homes in the city are detached single-family housing (US Census Bureau, ACS 2018-2022). When comparing the city to its neighbors to the north and south, this figure is well over double that of Redmond (40.9 percent) and Issaquah (37.4 percent), and represents the highest overall percentage of detached single-family homes for cities with populations over 30,000 in King County.

The predominance of single-family dwellings is reflected in the city’s high rate of homeownership, which is much higher in Sammamish (84.2 percent) than across King County (56.2 percent). This too is the highest percentage of homeownership households in all cities in King County with populations over 30,000. The median home sales price in Sammamish is also the highest in the county at \$1,647,500, compared to \$844,975 countywide (Redfin, 2024).

Condominiums in Sammamish provide a less expensive form of ownership housing given their median sales price of \$625,000, but this type still requires a household income greater than the county median (\$116,044). Additionally, condominium homes in Sammamish are only a small portion of the overall housing stock. For the remaining non-homeowning households (15.8 percent), rental units in Sammamish are highly concentrated in the Klahanie neighborhood in the city’s southeast. Most of these rental units were constructed well prior to the area’s annexation in 2016.

Figure 24. Sammamish Home Prices vs Median Incomes



ACS 2018-2022, Redfin, Framework, 2025

* Median Home Sale Price does not equal the 2024 number cited above as the available ACS data on income used for comparison ends in 2022.

Taken together, these conditions make Sammamish currently one of the least affordable cities in King County. There are several factors affecting the diversity and cost of housing in both the city and the Town Center:

- **High land costs** - Land is becoming increasingly expensive in the city and in the region. The average home price in Sammamish is now well beyond the means of most county residents in terms of income levels and monthly payments. While the high land cost creates an immense challenge for providing affordable housing, it's a strong incentive for increasing the intensity and diversity of housing types.
- **Environmental constraints** - Approximately one half of Town Center's open and available acreage is not useable for housing construction due to wetlands and other environmental restrictions. Steep topography also provides a considerable constraint on housing development. However, these factors are also opportunities, as these attributes will tend to be amenities for residents of the area. The nature of these constraints tends to support clustered housing patterns, in which less constrained lands support a higher intensity of development and possibly a greater diversity of housing types. These environmental concerns also tend to make multi-family housing types more acceptable than single-family

uses due to their smaller footprint on the land where structured parking can feasibly be provided.

- **Development intensity contrasts** - Since Sammamish historically developed as a predominantly low-density suburb, there are naturally concerns that more intensive multi-family development will change the character of the community. The stark contrast between the visual character of Town Center's currently undeveloped properties versus images of the higher-intensity mixed-use development envisioned for the Urban Core can be difficult for long-time residents to imagine positively. This issue is particularly important to address at the edges of the Town Center, where new development is adjacent to single-family neighborhoods. Greater residential development intensities are more acceptable in the core mixed-use areas away from the Town Center boundaries.
- **Traffic congestion** - Sammamish's limited citywide roadway network and public transit options, combined with increasing traffic congestion, have often contributed to arguments in favor of limiting new residential development. These concerns include congestion to new and existing roads within the Town Center and increasing difficulties for Sammamish residents in getting on and off the plateau. On the other hand, considering the city's deficiency in retail uses, the concentration of housing in a mixed-use configuration offers an opportunity to reduce the need for vehicular trips off the plateau.
- **Property ownership configuration** - Outside of the Urban Core, Town Center's numerous and relatively small property ownerships present a challenge to coordinated residential development. The need to cost-effectively provide necessary infrastructure, however, provides a strong incentive for property owners wishing to develop to coordinate with nearby property owners. Coordination typically provides greater opportunities for a higher intensity of development and, subsequently, a greater profit for current property owners. Care needs to be taken in how these developments are coordinated and phased, how the infrastructure is connected, and how the new development transitions to adjacent properties.
- **Changing demographics and urban interests** - While Sammamish's population is relatively young and the average household size is large (3.0 compared to a county average of 2.4 per the ACS 2018-2022 estimates), there is strong interest in providing for a greater diversity of housing types from a multitude of viewpoints.
- **Downsizing empty nesters** - Sammamish will see an increasing number of empty-nest residents. Regional trends show that empty nesters are increasingly interested in downsizing to dwelling units in locations that are close to restaurants, parks, and amenities, and without large yards to maintain.
- **Opportunities for young adults to settle in Sammamish** - Given current housing prices and expected trends, few of the students now in Sammamish will be able to afford a place of their own in the city once they leave their parents' house without financial assistance. Furthermore, young adults are increasingly favoring higher-amenity environments over traditional suburban neighborhoods.
- **Sammamish workers** - Many people who work in Sammamish - such as teachers, firefighters, police officers, grocery workers, and other service industry employees - want to live here but cannot afford to. Without a diversity of housing options, Sammamish risks a future where the workers who make the city function are forced to live increasingly far away,

leading to longer commutes, potential labor shortages, and a loss of connection and community.

Strategy

Amount, Type, and Configuration of Housing

Town Center is anticipated to play a major role in accommodating Sammamish's long-term housing growth, particularly when it comes to providing opportunities for affordable housing. As such, the Plan's strategy for creating sustainable housing growth hinges on the alignment of development standards with financial feasibility. By aligning the updated Town Center Code with desired and permitted housing types, the overall capacity for housing, including affordable units, can increase significantly.

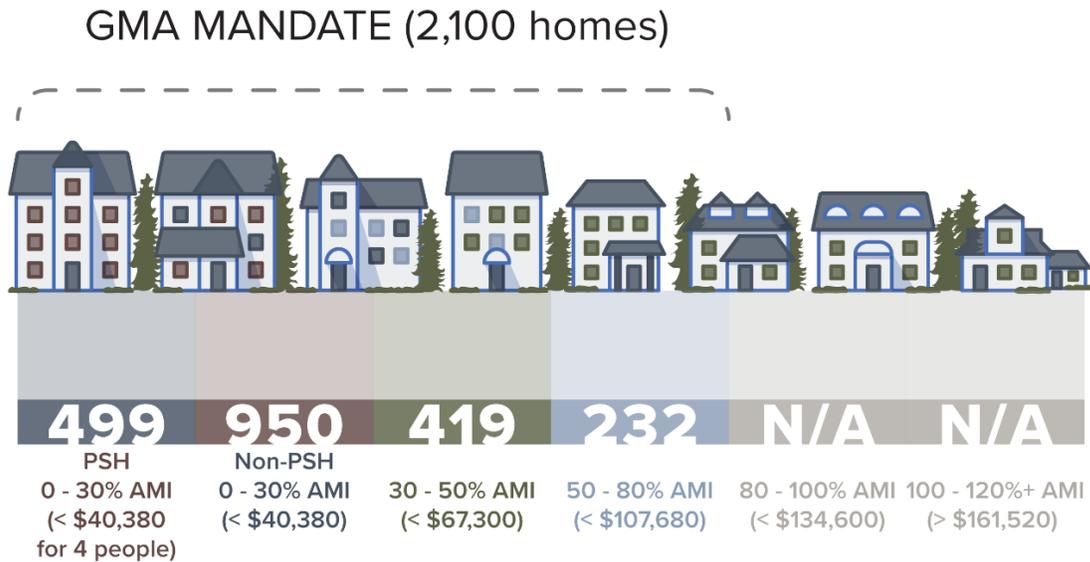
The Plan also calls for land use regulations that facilitate implementation of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan's Housing element goals include the provision of a diversity of housing types and densities to meet changing population needs and preferences (Goal HG-3), and development of housing in the city that serves the needs of all economic segments of the community (Goal HG-6).

Because many parts of the Town Center allow for both residential and non-residential uses, it is difficult to precisely predict the exact configuration of housing units that will ultimately be built. To address this, the Town Center Plan will align development standards with desired and feasible project types through a form-based code, aiming for predictability and flexibility for developers and clarity for City staff and the public.

Affordable Housing

Washington's ongoing housing crisis led the state legislature to amend the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 2021. These amendments now require cities and counties to actively support the development of housing for all income levels below the prevailing Area Median Income (AMI), including permanent supportive housing and emergency housing. As part of implementing these goals, a regional planning process identifies the number of housing units across varying income levels that would be needed to equitably distribute affordable housing development across the region. Cities must ensure that their zoning laws allow for construction of projects and types of housing that can contribute to the supply of affordable housing, such as apartment buildings in certain areas. Sammamish's targeted provision of housing units through 2044 appears below in Figure 25.

Figure 25. 2044 Housing Growth by Income Band in Sammamish



City of Sammamish and Framework, 2025

Town Center will play a critical role in accommodating Sammamish’s long-term housing growth, especially in providing affordable housing opportunities. The updated Town Center Plan focuses on aligning development standards with market feasibility, ensuring sustainable housing growth. By updating the Town Center Code to reflect desired and feasible housing types, the City aims to significantly increase housing capacity, including affordable housing units.

Due to land availability, real estate market conditions, and increasing labor and materials costs, market-rate and affordable housing construction has been slow to take off in Town Center. However, moving forward, residential development within Town Center is expected to accommodate a significant amount of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income residents - more than 1,000 affordable units over the next 20 years, as stated in the adopted 2024 Comprehensive Plan. A development feasibility analysis conducted early in the update process determined that requiring 10% of all new housing units built in Town Center to be affordable at 80% AMI is achievable, based on current and projected market conditions.

The goals, policies, and recommended implementation actions of the Town Center Plan aim to:

- Address the shortage of housing for low- and moderate-income households, including local employees.
- Promote development of diverse types of housing to accommodate households at all life stages (downsizing empty nesters, young renters, senior living, and more).
- Preserve opportunities for affordable housing as the community continues to grow.
- Support the creation of a vibrant, sustainable, pedestrian-oriented community in Town Center.

Goals and Policies

Housing Amount, Type, and Location

Goal TH-1: Facilitate additional growth in Town Center through environmental study, regulatory amendment, and adoption of a form-based code.

- TH-1.1 Accommodate a meaningful portion of Sammamish’s anticipated population and employment growth within the Town Center, consistent with Sammamish's Comprehensive Plan, Washington’s Growth Management Act, and regional goals established by the PSRC.
- TH-1.2 Adopt a form-based code for Town Center that emphasizes higher-intensity mixed-use development in the Urban Core zone, mid-intensity development in the Urban Mixed zone, and middle housing development in the Garden Mixed zone.
- TH-1.3 Adopt development regulations that support the community's goal for a pedestrian-friendly Town Center, with mixed uses and more intensive residential development than in other areas of Sammamish.

Housing Design

Goal TH-2: Encourage quality housing design that is sensitive to the desired intensities of the Urban Core, Urban Mixed, and Garden Mixed areas in Town Center.

- TH-2.1 Through the new Town Center form-based code, ensure that public objectives for thoughtful and varied building design, open space, environmental quality, trails, access, and walkability are achieved.
- TH-2.2 Incentivize sustainable housing design and construction, encouraging energy efficiency, integration of renewable energy, water conservation, and other “green building” characteristics.

Affordable Housing

Goal TH-3: Ensure the provision of housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households, offered in a wide variety of forms, and well integrated into development projects.

- TH-3.1 Require a minimum of 10 percent of housing be affordable to low- and moderate-income households for all new housing development in Town Center.
- TH-3.2 Provide density, economic, or other regulatory incentives that encourage developments to include more than the minimum amount of required affordable housing in the Town Center (20 percent or more of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households).

- TH-3.3 Long-term affordability, and other requirements of affordable units, shall be secured through a recorded agreement with the City and restrictive covenants recorded on title.
- TH-3.4 Regulations shall have provisions that allow satisfying all or part of the affordable housing requirements with alternative compliance methods proposed by the applicant (such as a fee-in-lieu), provided such method achieves a result equal to or better than providing affordable housing on-site and meets the intent of this Affordable Housing section.
- TH-3.5 Affordable dwelling units shall be comparable in design, tenure, and mix to nearby market-rate dwellings.

Recommended Implementation Actions

- 1. Align development standards and housing capacity to increase the feasibility of market and affordable housing.** This includes supporting up to the maximum residential capacity thresholds established by the SEIS through an updated form-based code. Any increase in capacity does not require significant increases to building heights or any major departures from current development standards or allowed uses in Town Center.
- 2. Adopt a form-based code.** Together, design standards established by the updates to a form-based code will simplify the design review process and guide residential development consistent with the vision, goals, and policies of the Town Center plan.
- 3. Adopt development regulations requiring all residential developments to provide housing affordable to persons of low and moderate income.** Specifically, each development shall include or otherwise provide an amount of housing equal to 10 percent of the units in new housing developments that is affordable to persons of low- or moderate-income levels. Specific allowances for alternative affordability levels will be established in the updated development regulations for Town Center. These may include different affordability thresholds for rental and ownership housing, and may differ from the provisions of the citywide Mandatory Affordable Housing Program.
- 4. Establish incentives and a development agreement process for additional affordable housing and other public benefits.** The development regulations may include additional incentives for development that provide more than the minimum required affordability. Non-regulatory incentives such as the multi-family tax exemption should also be considered.
- 5. Adopt development regulations that allow affordable dwelling units to be provided off-site, provided they are still within or near the Town Center boundaries.** Applicant proposals to develop separate affordable dwelling units must achieve a result equal to or better than providing required affordable housing onsite, and shall be submitted to the City for consideration and approval. Locating housing within ¼ mile of transit for example may improve household budgets and affordability.

6. **Require a recorded agreement ensuring sustained affordability for required affordable housing units.** Prior to issuing a building permit, an agreement in a form acceptable to the City that addresses price restrictions, homebuyer or tenant qualifications, long-term affordability, and any other applicable topics of the affordable housing units shall be recorded against title with King County Department of Records and Elections. For projects approved for off-site affordable housing, there will be a recorded agreement on both the “sending” property and the “receiving” property. The covenant on the sending site will be released once the affordable housing is completed on the receiving property.
7. **Restructure the TDR Program as an optional incentive program.** The current TDR program credits have already been allocated, which limits overall housing production under the Town Center code. The TDR program should be restructured to be an optional incentive program but not be required for feasible development in Town Center. All development in Town Center will require affordable housing regardless of the use of TDRs.
8. **Explore additional incentives.** Explore the adoption of other incentives such as a Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program or a green building incentive program for the Town Center, as a way to encourage affordable housing.

Mobility & Streets

Transportation improvements are a critical element of the Town Center Plan. They are intended to provide safe and attractive connections to Town Center uses and amenities, and to help the City achieve its Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction goals. The plan promotes bicycle and pedestrian access, both as a means of transportation and recreation, and provides for development that is conducive to walking, biking, and transit use.

Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The sidewalks along 228th Avenue Southeast, Southeast 4th Street, Southeast 8th Street, and the pathways through the City Hall complex and new Sammamish Commons together comprise the designated pedestrian areas currently in the Town Center. The 12-foot-wide sidewalk on the east side of 228th Avenue Southeast is intended to function as a combined bicycle and pedestrian trail. Painted bicycle lanes on Southeast 8th Street and Southeast 4th Street form additional bicycle infrastructure, though the lanes on Southeast 4th Street blend into the sidewalks at the roundabout intersections.

Topography, the incomplete street grid, and the separation of uses pose substantial challenges to bicycle and pedestrian access for getting to and around the Town Center. 228th Avenue Southeast itself can be a formidable pedestrian barrier due to its traffic volume and width. Nevertheless, the Town Center's terrain offers tremendous opportunities for a recreational trail system that can be planned and developed in conjunction with new Town Center development. This could be a combination of soft surface nature trails along the various wetland buffers to urban multi-use trails connecting developments. The topography may also allow for opportunities for trail configurations that run parallel to the slopes.

The street grid discussed above provides opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian traffic within separated bicycle lanes, shared lanes, and wide sidewalks. Community feedback has emphasized the important of separating vehicles from walking and biking traffic in Town Center, providing a sense of safety for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Compact and coordinated mixed-use development as discussed in the Vision Statement also provides an opportunity to reduce vehicular trips by locating uses close to one another and encouraging walking and bicycling.

Transit Service

All fixed-route transit service in Town Center is located along 228th Avenue Southeast. King County Metro provides one weekday all-day bus route, #269, with headways generally every 30 minutes (two other King County Metro routes have been suspended in recent years). Sound Transit provides a weekday limited-service bus route #554 for service between Redmond and Seattle. There are no weekend fixed-route service options in Sammamish; route #554 does operate on weekends, but only between Seattle and Issaquah.

King County’s on-demand “Metro Flex” service provides rides for the same cost as a bus trip, and is available between 7am and 6pm Monday through Friday, and between 9am and 6pm on Saturdays. The service area is limited to a portion of Sammamish, and in Town Center service is focused on the eastern half, with other coverage extending along 228th Avenue Southeast, including City Hall.

Vehicular Access

The primary elements of the Town Center’s current circulation network include 228th Avenue Southeast (functioning as the central north-south spine) and three east-west streets (East Main Street and Southeast 4th and Southeast 8th Streets). Planning carefully for the 228th Avenue Southeast corridor is necessary for the Town Center’s development and success.

- **East of 228th Avenue Southeast**

East Main Street and Southeast 8th frame the northern and southern boundaries of Town Center, respectively, east of 228th Avenue Southeast. East Main Street is a substandard local roadway that only provides access to a few houses and ends before reaching the eastern boundary of the Town Center. With a signalized intersection at 228th Avenue Southeast, East Main Street provides a good opportunity to access development in the northeastern quadrant of the Town Center. Southeast 8th Street is a designated minor arterial that separates Skyline High School from the Town Center and connects with neighborhoods to the east. While Southeast 4th Street currently ends just east of 228th Avenue Southeast, it offers an opportunity to extend the street to serve the eastern portions of Town Center.

- **West of 228th Avenue Southeast**

Southeast 4th Street is the primary access road for most of the Town Center properties west of 228th Avenue Southeast. The two-lane roadway (designated “collector”) connects neighborhoods to the west with the Town Center. Distinct challenges for the development of the western quadrants include the steep hill off 228th Avenue Southeast and a substandard, indirect route to neighborhoods to the west of the Town Center (via 218th Avenue Southeast and Southeast 8th Street).

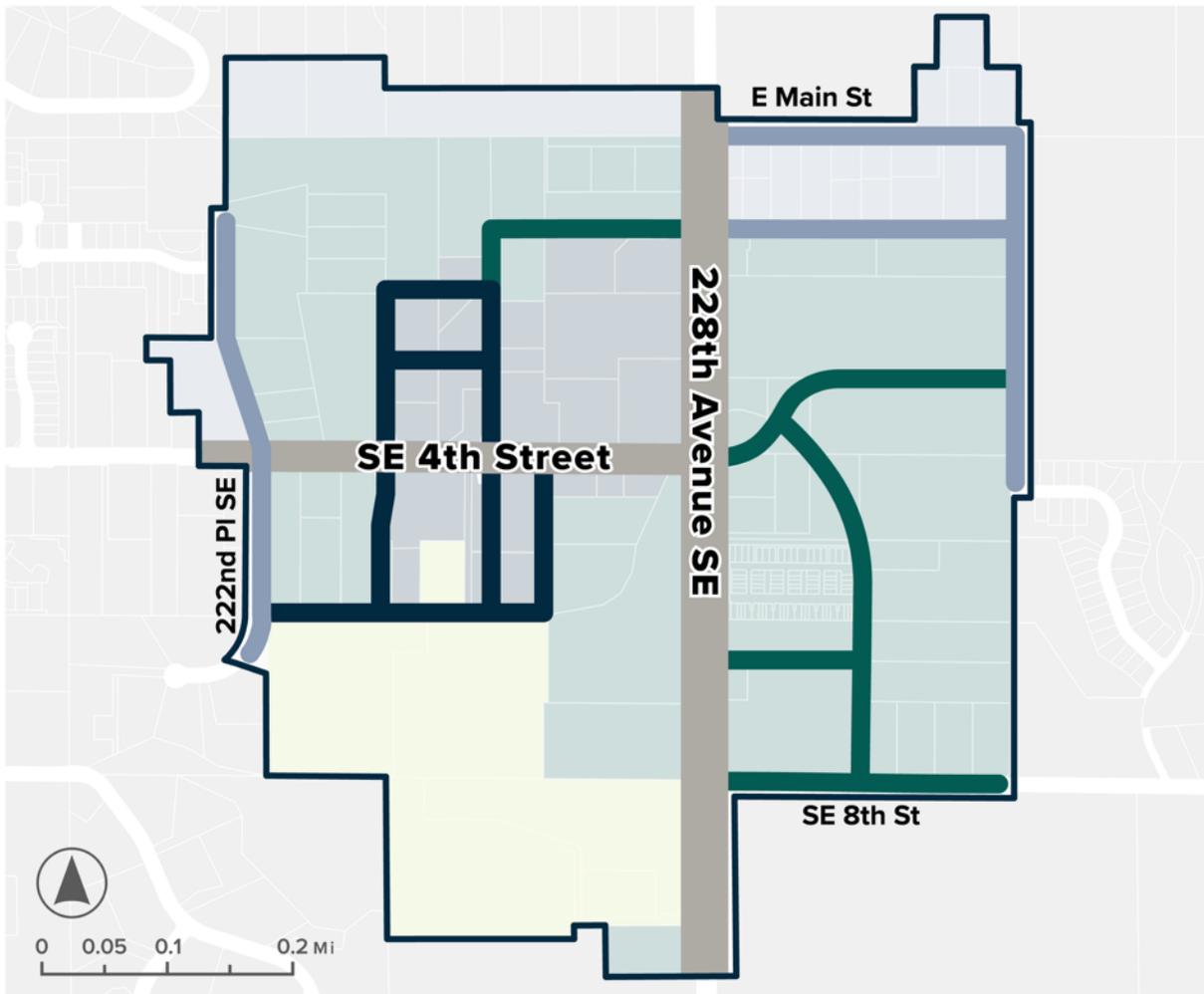
A series of small private roadways currently provide access to many of the existing homes in the Town Center. Most, if not all, will be insufficient to serve the desired Town Center development. Topography and the fragmented pattern of property ownership will pose significant challenges to the development of a connected local roadway system. Topography could make the roadways more expensive, require routes that do not correspond with land ownership patterns, create visibility challenges, and present bicycle and pedestrian access challenges. At the same time, the topography will likely help keep speeds lower and create a roadway system that will be unique to the Town Center.

Parking for existing uses in the Town Center Plan is provided by off-street parking lots and individual garages. The civic campus south of the Sammamish Commons, which includes City Hall, the library, and the Sammamish Community & Aquatic Center/YMCA, features underground parking. The increase in development intensity desired as part of the plan will require substantial parking. Much of this will need to be within and underneath structures. While this is more

Street Type Designations

New street type designations introduced in the updated Town Center Plan will be used, in conjunction with the updated Districts, to regulate design elements of the streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and frontages allowed in Town Center. Each street type includes a design cross section(s), illustrated below, that shows the locations and dimensions of sidewalks, bike facilities, on-street parking, loading zones, vehicle lanes, street furniture, and landscaping and stormwater areas. These Street Designations and possible locations are shown below in Figure 27, and each type is described and illustrated in detail in subsequent sections.

Figure 27. Proposed Street Network Designations



Street Designations

Town Center Conceptual Street Network

- Urban Core
- Urban Mixed
- Residential

Proposed Districts

- Urban Core
- Urban Mixed
- Garden Mixed
- Civic

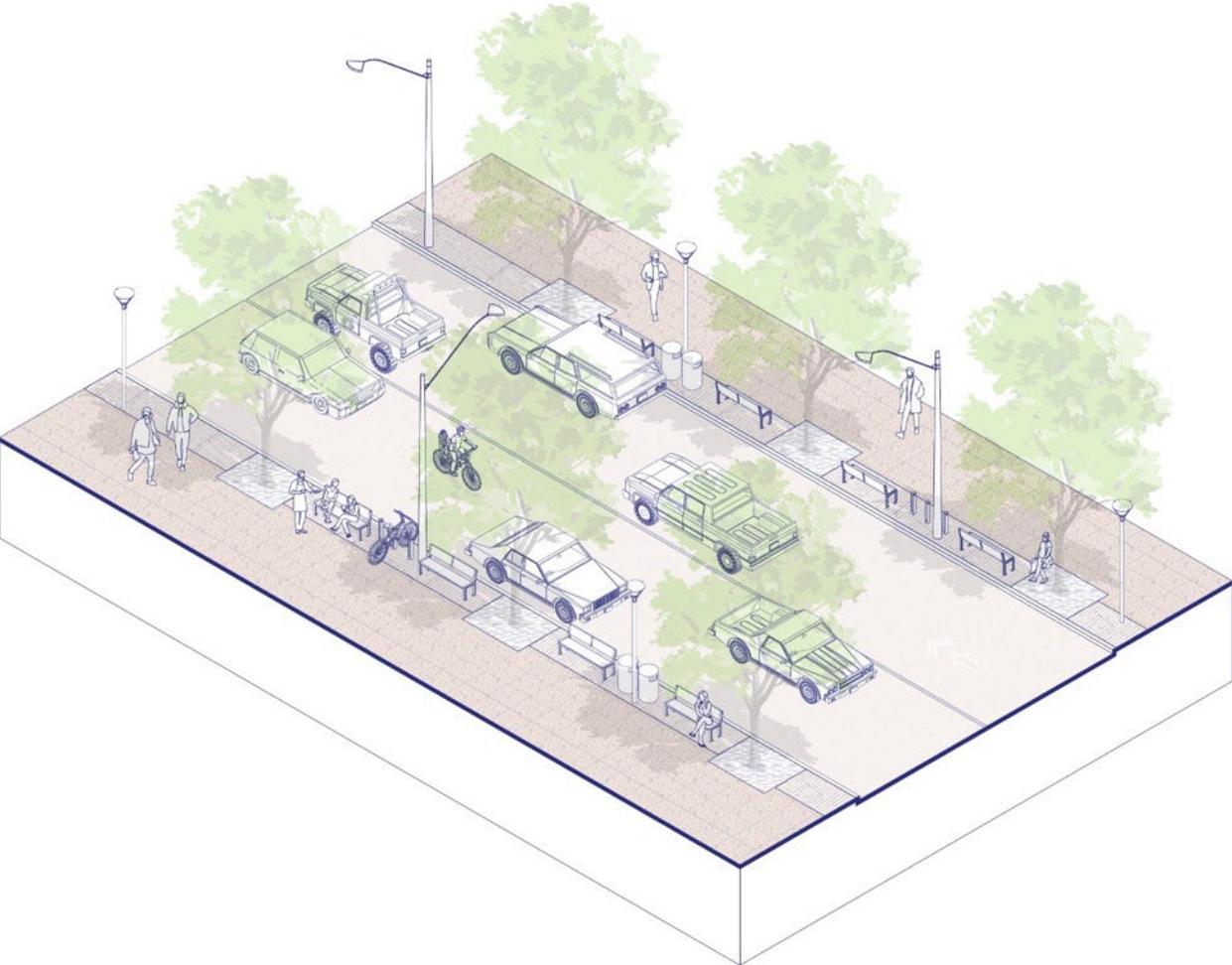
Framework, 2025

Urban Core

The Urban Core street designation will be applied to streets primarily within the Urban Core District. Design standards regulating Urban Core streets will include:

- Implementing wide sidewalks to support active street-level uses;
- Providing on-street parking for short-term access to retail, restaurants, and parks;
- Adding pedestrian-scale lighting;
- Planting street trees in a variety of forms and species;
- Requiring weather protection, seating, and other pedestrian amenities;
- Installing public art and/or sculpture; and
- Employing sustainable stormwater treatment through the use of Silva Cells, structural soils, or other means to support healthy vegetation and trees.

Figure 28. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Core street

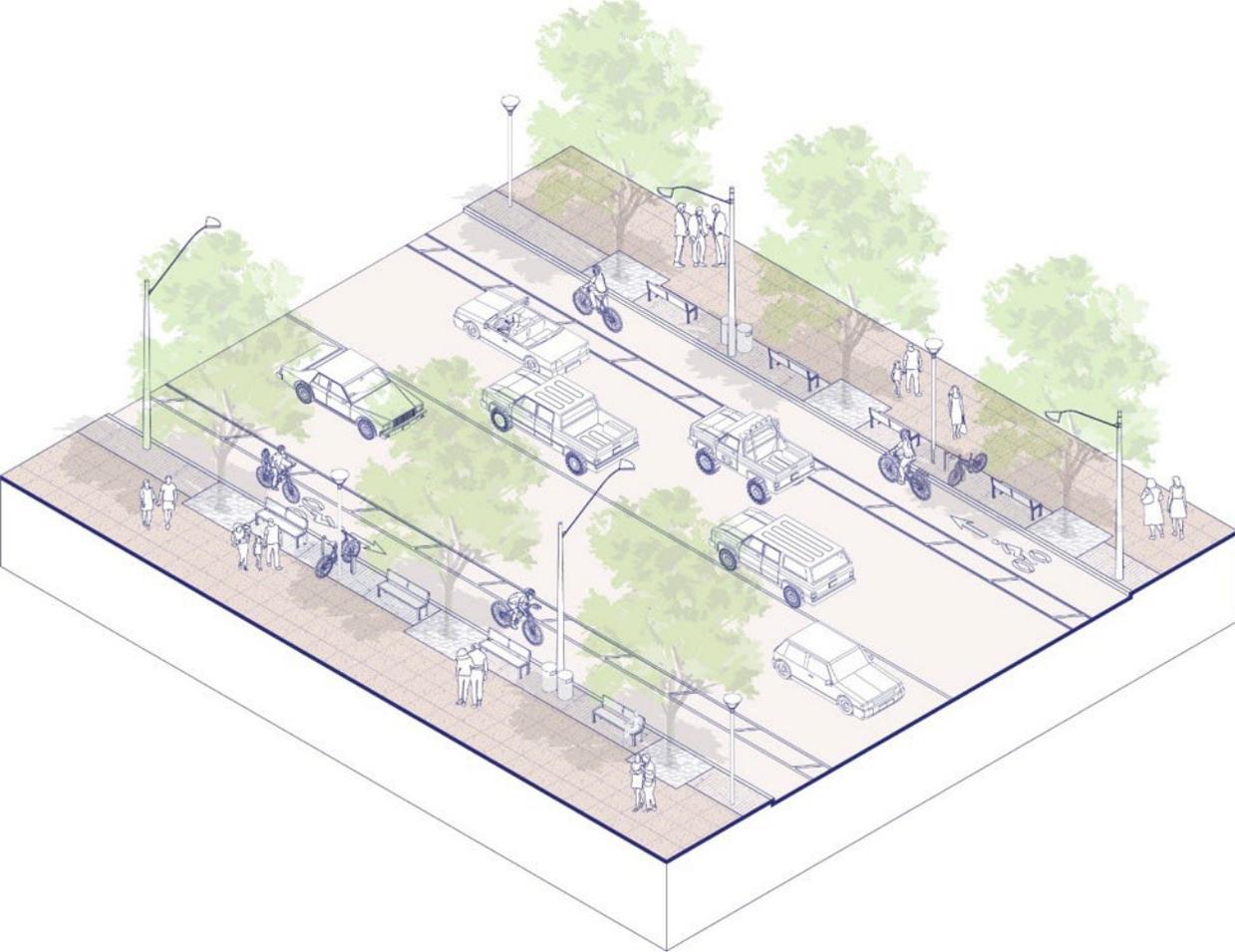


Framework, 2025

Urban Core - Multimodal

The Urban Core - Multimodal street designation maintains the same design and features on the sidewalk as an Urban Core street, but adds protected bicycle lanes in each direction. This multimodal street type is an option that may be used on streets that provide important connections where dedicated bike facilities are warranted. The same frontage types will apply in both the urban core and urban core multimodal street types.

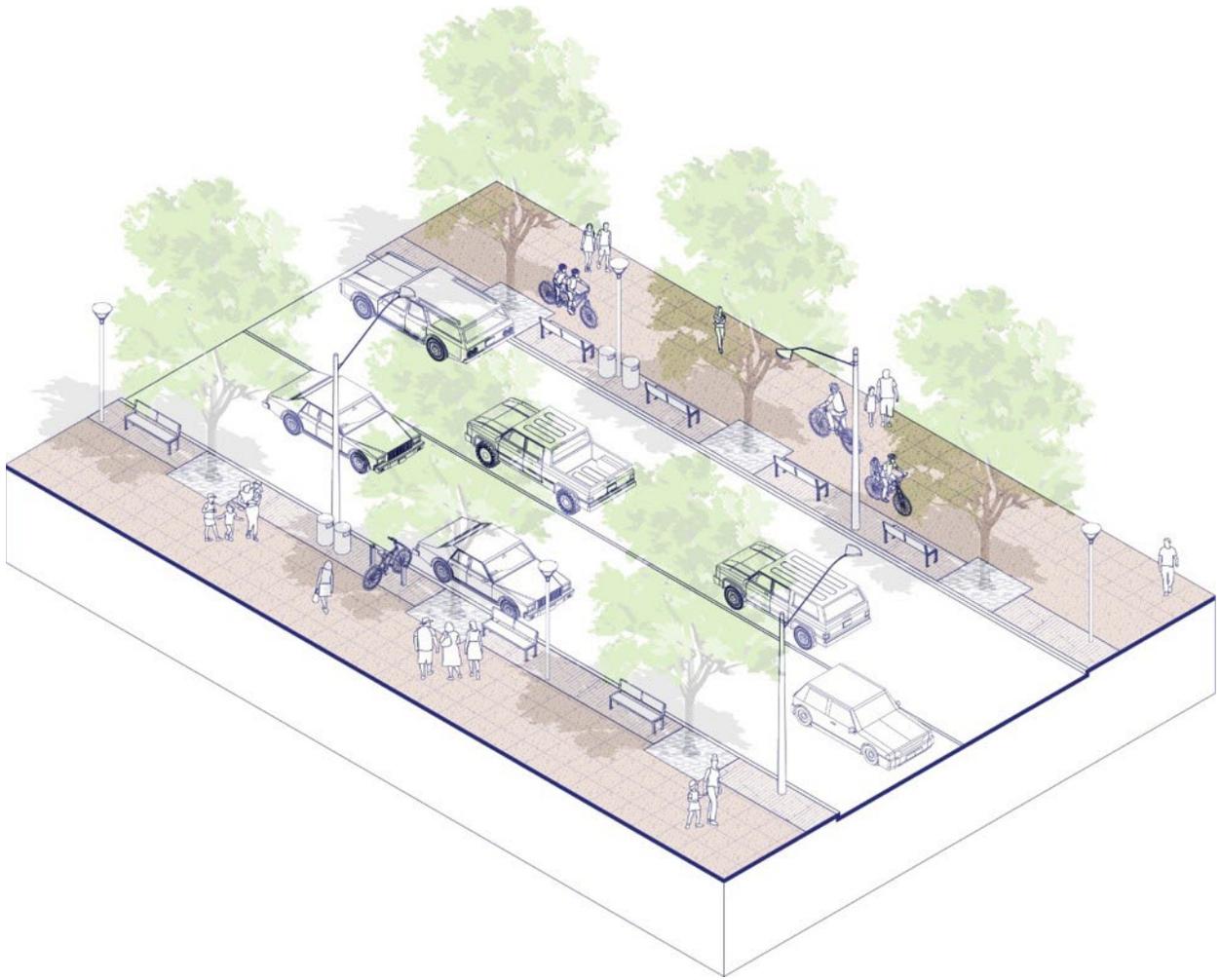
Figure 29. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Core Multimodal street



Framework, 2025

Another variation on the Urban Core - Multimodal street type incorporates a shared-use path rather than protected bike lanes. The shared-use path allows for two-way travel for pedestrians and bicycles on one side of the street (See Figure 30).

Figure 30. An Urban Core - Multimodal street with the Shared-Use Path option

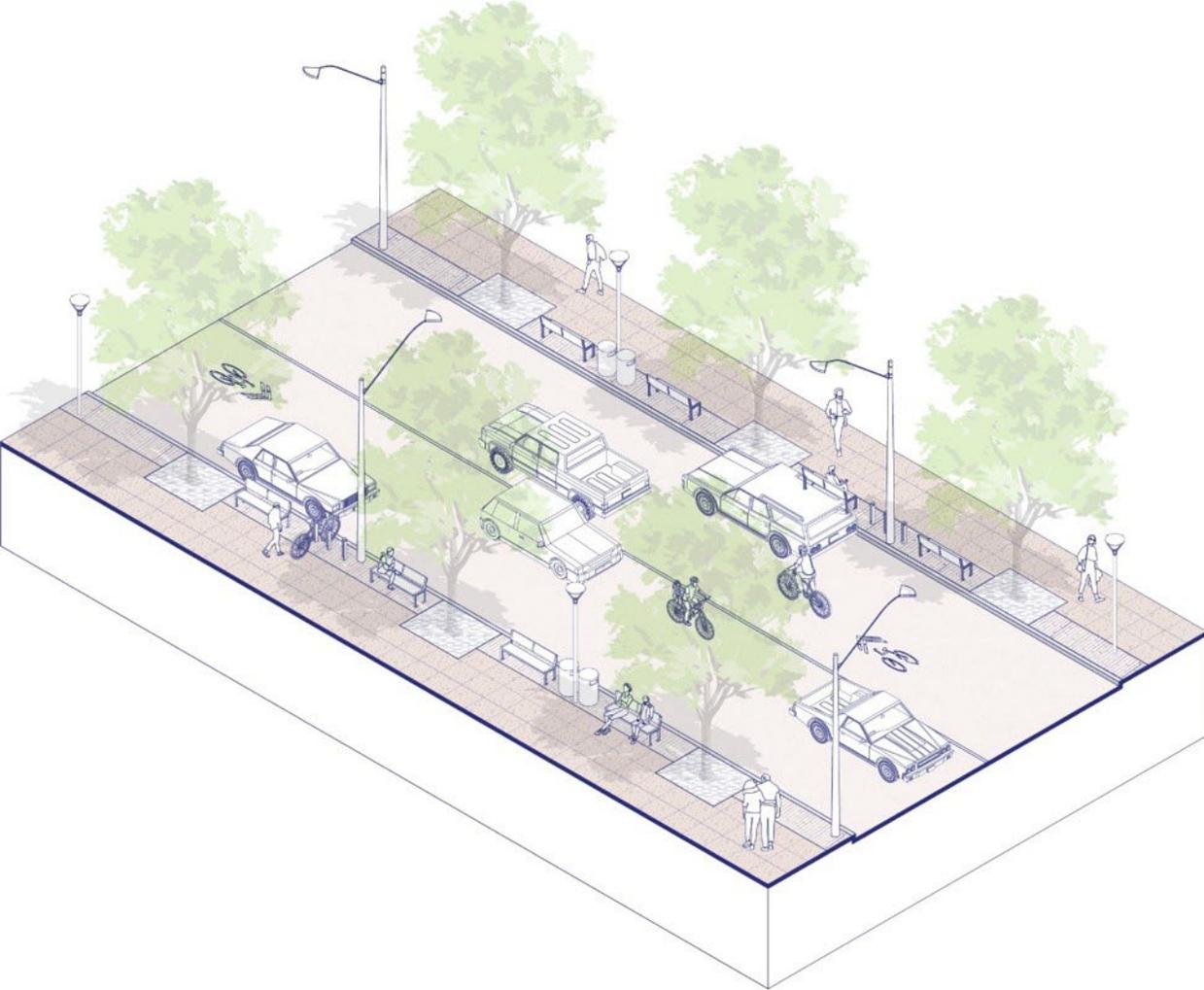


Framework, 2025

Urban Mixed

The Urban Mixed street designation will be used primarily in the Urban Mixed District and is intended to accommodate a variety of frontage types and street level uses, including street level residential use with individual entries, retail spaces, small scale offices, and service providers (See Figure 31).

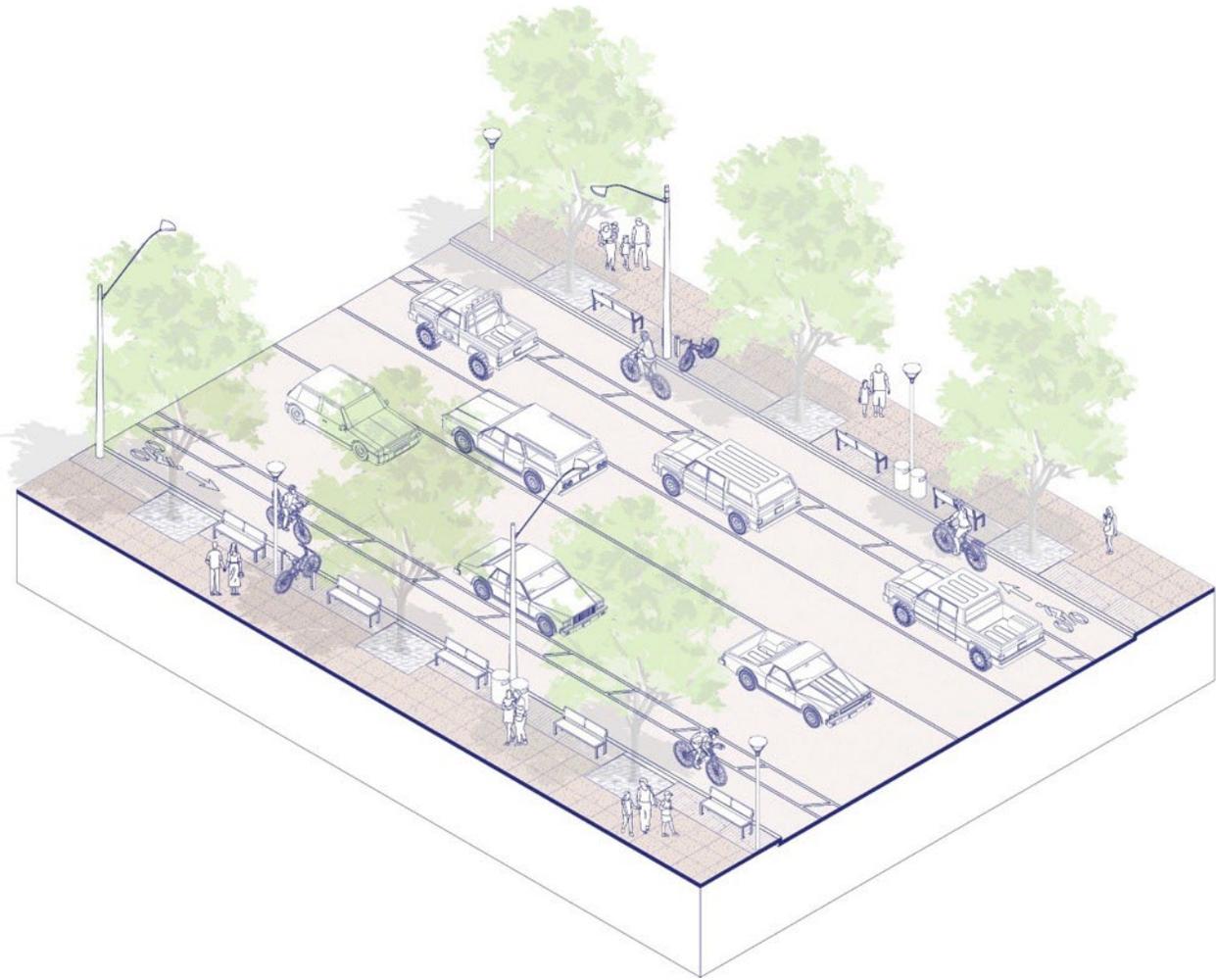
Figure 31. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Mixed street



Framework, 2025

A possible variation on the Urban Mixed street type includes protected bike lanes in each direction, similar to the Urban Core – Multimodal street. This street type would likely be used in limited circumstances where an important connection warrants dedicated bike facilities.

Figure 32. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of an Urban Mixed - Multimodal street

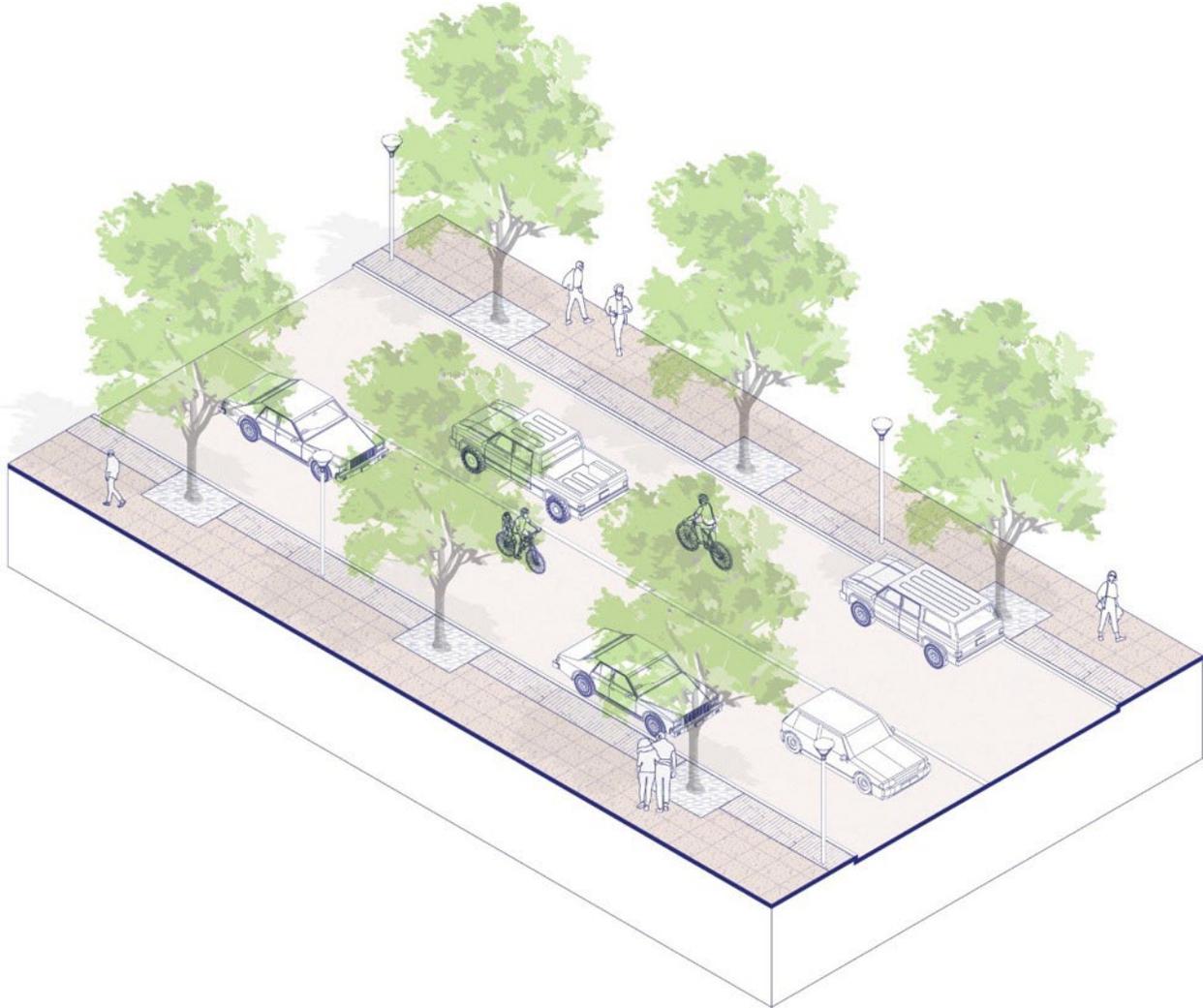


Framework, 2025

Residential Street

The Residential street type appears primarily in the Garden Mixed District to support a variety of middle housing types. The street type may also be deployed in the Urban Mixed District on streets planned for residential development rather than mixed-use. The Residential street type includes on-street parking on both sides, street trees, sidewalks scaled to residential use, and stormwater facilities (See Figure 33).

Figure 33. Conceptual diagram illustrating features of Residential street

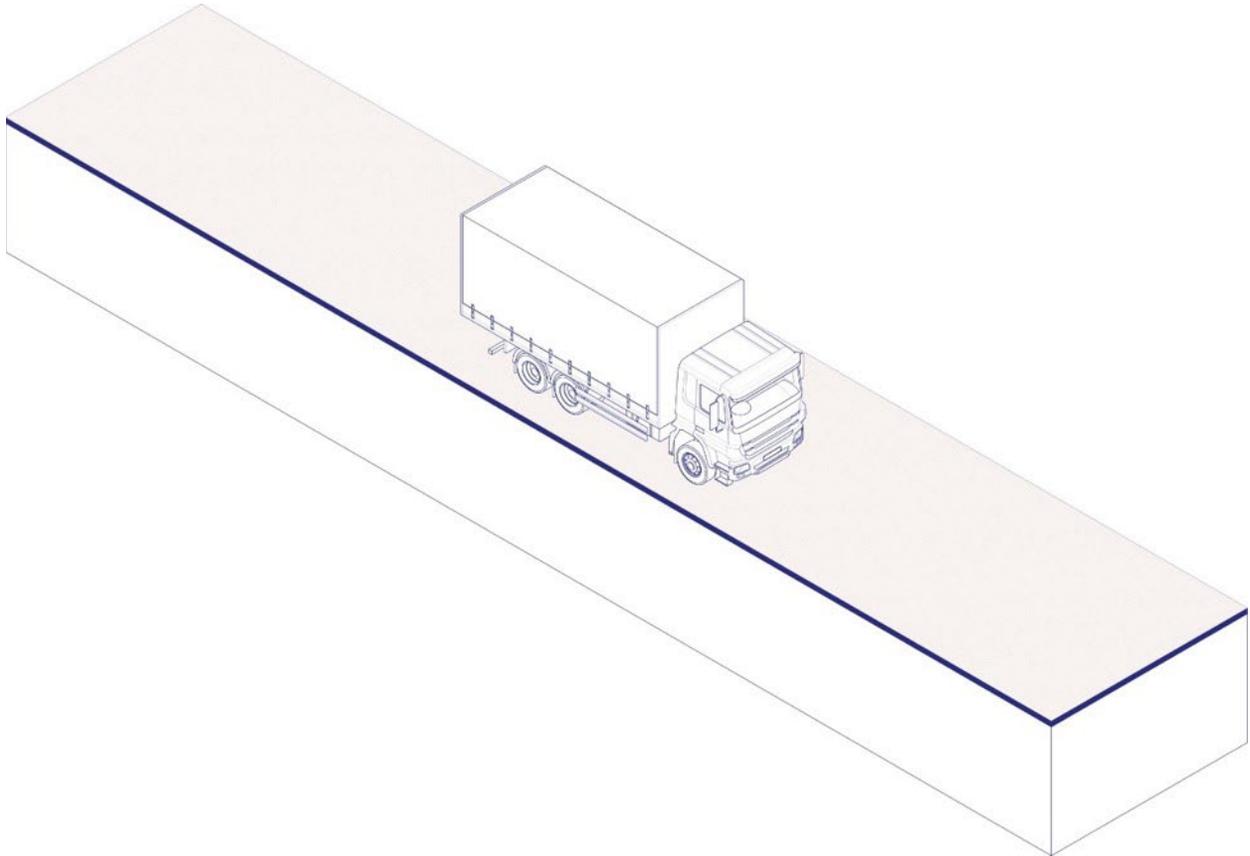


Framework, 2025

Alley

Alleys are an important feature for the Town Center across all the districts. Alleys are typically at least 20' in width and may vary depending on whether they accommodate higher-intensity mixed-use development or middle housing in residential areas. Alleys can provide opportunities to limit direct access from streets to individual properties, which will make Town Center safer and more comfortable for walking and biking by minimizing potential conflicts with vehicles (See Figure 34)

Figure 34. Alley Street Type

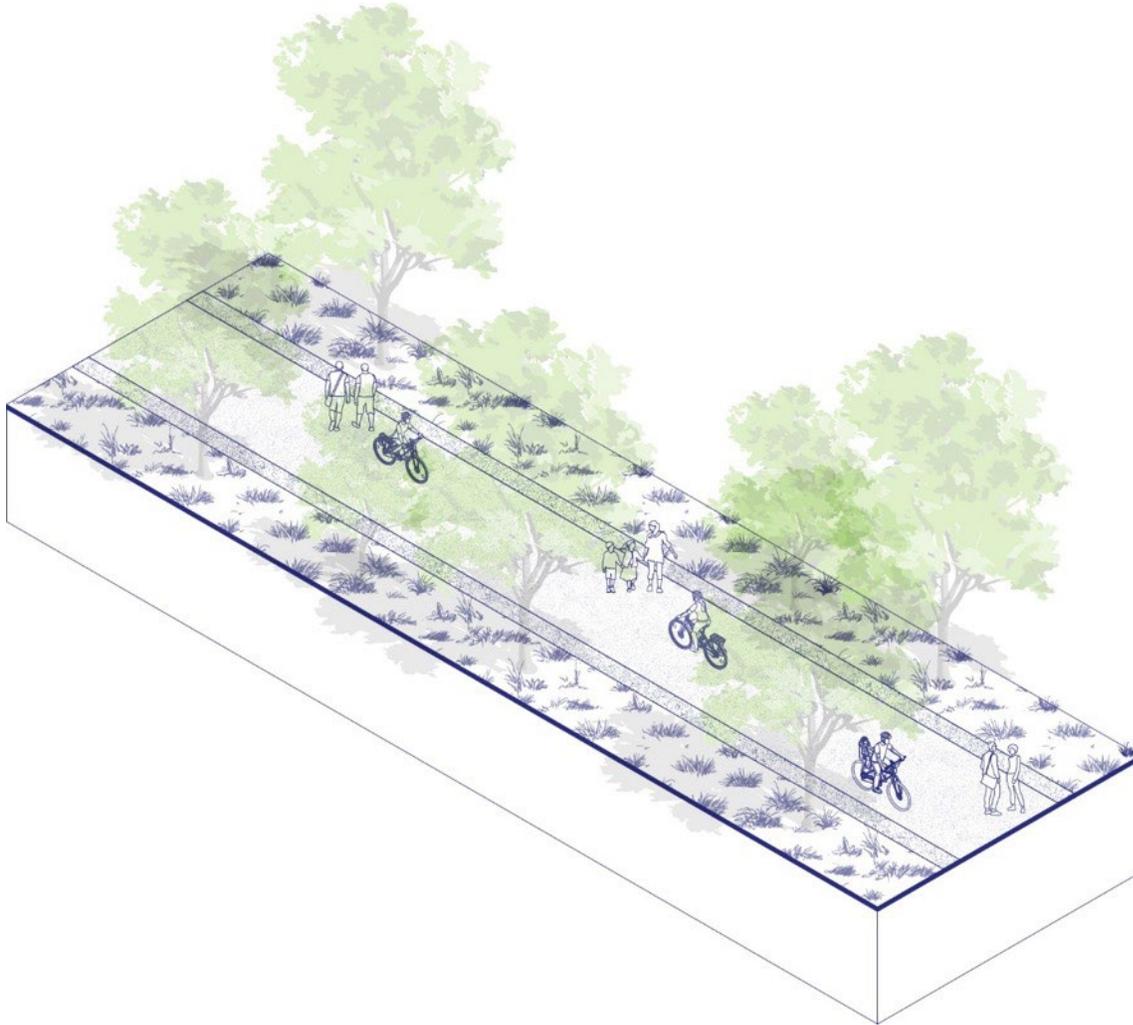


Framework, 2025

Trails

Trails are an important feature in the Town Center and are desired by the community. Trails can take a variety of forms and functions such as wooded trails in areas not suitable for other development or urban trails that may front along active uses such as restaurants and cafes (See Figure 35).

Figure 35. Trail Street Type



Framework, 2025

Multimodal Access

Based on the intensity and configuration of development planned for the Town Center, a range of improvements will be necessary to serve development and mitigate multimodal impacts on the city's roadway network. This includes substantial improvements already made to existing roads (particularly SE 4th Street) and the creation of new roads. To relieve pressure on 228th Avenue, new connector roads will be needed to serve development in the northwest, northeast, and southeast quadrants. Additional local access roads will also be needed to serve new development and provide for a connected circulation system. These improvements, together with a connected system of trails, will allow Town Center residents and visitors a variety of choices in how to get around the area.

Parking

Parking will be accommodated through a combination of off- and on-street spaces/lots. Compact and coordinated mixed-use development will provide opportunities for shared parking facilities and electric vehicle charging stations. Such facilities may be shared between public and private uses, or between different private entities through shared-use agreements. Most of the required off-street parking will be underground or within structures due to the level of density anticipated in the Town Center and to address environmental and aesthetic concerns.

Non-Motorized Transportation

A critical element of the non-motorized transportation strategy involves the compact and coordinated nature of development. The Town Center's configuration will reduce walking distances between uses and amenities and reduce the dependency on automobiles.

Complementing compact development, a safe, efficient, and attractive pedestrian and bicycle network is one of the top priorities for Town Center's development. Sidewalks should be provided on all public streets, with the widest sidewalks in the mixed-use areas, and dedicated bicycle lanes are recommended for key connector streets. The City is currently developing a Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan, and future updates to the Town Center's non-motorized network should be aligned with the goals and projects recommended by that plan.

Transit Mobility Hub

Increased growth and activity envisioned in the Town Center Plan will likely provide enough development to justify increased transit access, frequency, and service. In the future, Town Center would benefit from the addition of a "mobility hub" along 228th Avenue Southeast, which would integrate transit connections with parking, electric vehicle charging, and other potential amenities..

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management, or TDM, refers to a variety of strategies that reduce congestion on transportation corridors. TDM emphasizes commute options, including the use of carpools, vanpools, buses, bicycling, walking, compressed or varied work hours, or working from home. Sammamish's low number of local employment options and high cost of living means that most residents commute elsewhere to work, and the relatively few employees who work in the city must commute in from elsewhere, creating lopsided pressure on the system and exacerbating existing bottlenecks during peak commute times. TDM strategies will be particularly critical in Sammamish given the constraints of the city and region's roadway network and the cost to add capacity to the roadway network.

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation-demand management, or TDM, is described as "the art of influencing traveler behavior for the purpose of reducing or redistributing travel demand." The primary purpose of TDM is to reduce the number of vehicles using highway facilities while providing a wide variety of mobility options for those who wish to travel. Although the acronym "TDM" has been in use only since the mid-1980s, the concept of demand management first appeared during World War II, when drivers were urged to carpool and conserve gasoline. In 1974 the concept became institutionalized as part of the transportation management system (TMS) requirement promoted by joint planning regulations set by the Federal Highway Administration and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (now the Federal Transit Administration).

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (also called TOD) refers to pedestrian-friendly land development activities that are built within easy walking distance of a major transit station. TODs generally include a compact mix of different land uses that are oriented to public walkways, while automobile parking is minimized to promote pedestrian activity.

Goals and Policies

Draft Document Note: Underlined text represents key updates made to Goals, Policies, and Recommended Implementation Actions

Streets

Goal TT-1: Establish and maintain a connected hierarchy of streets that accommodates desired Town Center land uses and human activities.

TT-1.1 Upgrade SE 4th Street and Eastside Catholic High School's private access road as the primary east-west roadway connection within the Town Center.

TT-1.2 Coordinate the construction of new multimodal connector roads in tandem with new development to expand access options throughout Town Center.

TT-1.3 Enhance westerly roadway connections to and from the Town Center via SE 4th Street, 218th Avenue SE, 217th Avenue NE, and SE 8th Street.

TT-1.4 Enhance easterly roadway connections to and from the Town Center via an extension of 232nd Avenue Southeast.

Goal TT-2: Develop transportation facilities that support multimodal travel and reinforce Town Center's natural setting and identity, reinforcing the community's commitment to environmental sustainability.

TT-2.1 Design and configure roadways to protect ecologically critical areas by integrating sustainable design practice and resilient infrastructure.

TT-2.2 Establish street design standards to create vibrant streetscapes through integrated lighting, accessible crosswalks, resilient landscaping utilizing native plants, and distinctive street furniture.

TT-2.3 Emphasize the existing (and future) trail network as an opportunity to establish a distinctive identity for Town Center, through a blend of environmentally sensitive features, wayfinding and public art opportunities, and connections to the wider city.

Goal TT-3: Provide for a safe and accessible network of roadways to serve Town Center development.

TT-3.1 Site buildings and other development features in a manner that enhances Town Center's integrated circulation network.

TT-3.2 Minimize new access points off of 228th Avenue.

TT-3.3 Incorporate traffic-calming road design into the street standards for Town Center, integrating natural elements with speed-reducing and safety-enhancing measures.

Goal TT-4: Minimize transportation impacts on the natural environment, air quality, noise quality, and fuel consumption.

- TT-4.1 Implement traffic management strategies that facilitate efficient vehicular flow, such as Transportation Demand Management activities, while safeguarding pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-vehicular network users.
- TT-4.2 Design and construct roadways and parking areas to minimize the amount of impervious surface.
- TT-4.3 Emphasize sustainable development techniques in the design and construction of streets.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Goal TT-5: Create an attractive, safe, and accessible road and trail network that promotes walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized forms of transportation.

- TT-5.1 Develop a connected street/sidewalk and trail system (see also the Public Space, Parks, and Trails Element, pg. 80).
- TT-5.2 Establish street standards that encourage and safeguard pedestrian and bicycle use.

Parking

Goal TT-6: Provide right-sized parking that is appropriate for desired uses in Town Center, minimizing the impacts of parking facilities on the Town Center's visual environment.

- TT-6.1 Implement parking maximums and shared parking standards for land uses in Town Center.
- TT-6.2 Use parking design standards to incentivize structured parking over surface parking.
- TT-6.3 Configure land uses and development to encourage forms of non-motorized transportation and transit use, thus reducing the need for vehicular parking.
- TT-6.4 Use parking facilities as opportunities to expand the city's electric vehicle charging network.

Transit

Goal TT-8: Promote the use of transit and the expansion of transit service to serve Town Center development.

- TT-8.1 Through street design standards in the updated Town Center Code, design collectors and arterials to accommodate transit use.
- TT-8.2 Work with local transit agencies to enhance transit service to and from the Town Center, including the creation of a mobility hub along 228th Avenue Southeast.

Recommended Implementation Actions

Multimodal Access

- 1. Require development of key connector roads.** These roads will provide better circulation within the Town Center as development occurs across the district, and are intended to reduce pressure on 228th Avenue Southeast and Southeast 4th Street. These roads are likely to be built in phases parallel to development activity in the Town Center. The exact location and configuration of these roads may vary, but will conform to the street standards developed as part of the new Town Center Code. A conceptual proposal for such connectors is shown in Figure 27.
- 2. Convert Eastside Catholic's access road to a public street.** While this road is currently only used to access Eastside Catholic High School, it will become a key access point for future development within the eastern half of Town Center. Thus, this link is expected to facilitate a substantial amount of vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and bus traffic. The plan calls for converting this road to a public street (the extension of Southeast 4th Street) in phases.
- 3. Extend 232nd Avenue Southeast.** While this connection is intended primarily to serve new development to the east of the Town Center, extending this segment further to the southeast will provide more circulation options for uses within the Town Center and thus reduce pressure on both 228th Avenue Southeast and Southeast 4th Street.
- 4. Develop local access roads.** Develop local access roads. Additional public and private streets will be necessary to facilitate planned Town Center development. While the configuration of local access roads shown in Figure 26 is only an example, it was developed for the 2008 Plan to provide appropriate connections to the arterial and connector streets.
- 5. Establish an intersection at the southern end of the future Southeast Quadrant connector road along Southeast 8th Street, north of Skyline High School.** This access point may require special design considerations to accommodate adequate sight distances and intersection design.

Parking

- 6. Adopt parking standards emphasizing structured parking.** Specifically, at least 80 percent of all off-street parking spaces for new development in the Urban Core shall be within or underneath a structure.
- 7. Establish minimum and maximum parking requirements.** Set minimum requirements in accordance with SB 5184 to align with state regulation while providing the flexibility to encourage desired development. Set an appropriate cap on parking to minimize visual and environmental impacts of excessively large parking facilities on the Town Center.
- 8. Explore options for a public parking garage.** Explore options for a public/private parking garage in the mixed-use core area to facilitate park use and retail activity.

Non-Motorized Transportation

- 14. Construct sidewalks on all Town Center streets.** All Town center streets should be provided with comfortable and attractive sidewalks. Sidewalks will be designed to contribute to the character of the Town Center and include pedestrian amenities, including landscaping, seating, and other street furniture.

- 15. Plan and construct a non-motorized trail network.** Create a new trail system plan in alignment with the City’s Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, Transportation Master Plan (TMP), and Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Plan (BPMP). Prepare a proposal to construct primary trails.

- 16. Construct on-street bicycle facilities.** Facilities identified in this plan include a combination of bike lanes and shared auto/bike lanes on new and enhanced Town Center roadways.

Transit

- 19. Coordinate transit with King County Metro and Sound Transit.** Increasing transit service on existing routes serving Town Center and adjusting existing and/or creating new transit routes to effectively serve Town Center should be coordinated with King County Metro and Sound Transit.

- 20. Encourage transit use by local high schools.** Continue to promote transit use by students to reduce traffic stress on 228th Avenue Southeast and achieve Climate Action Plan goals including reductions to VMT and GHGs.

- 21. Pursue the projects identified in the Citywide Transit Plan.** Anticipated residential and commercial growth in Town Center will provide better conditions for transit access for a wider number of residents and commuters. With the planned development of a large mobility hub on 228th Avenue Southeast to provide increased transit access, the crosswalk study, bus stop amenity improvements, transit signal priority system, and general operations improvements identified in the Citywide Transit Plan will all contribute to establishing Town Center as the epicenter of transit in Sammamish.

Recommended Mitigation Actions

Below are recommended actions to mitigate the off-site impacts of the planned development within the Town Center. At this stage of the planning process, potential improvements have been identified but the feasibility and cost analyses have not been completed. In general, mitigating impacts to roadway and intersection segments can either be done through completing improvements that add capacity, through measures that reduce demand, or through adopting new policies that allow for higher levels of congestion.

- 1. Improve the non-motorized transportation network.** Planning, designing, and building well-connected walking and biking facilities in a compact Town Center will contribute to a vibrant, healthy, and accessible neighborhood.
- 2. Improve 212th Avenue Southeast/Southeast 8th Street intersection.** This intersection will require separated turn lanes for the south and east approaches of the intersection. This would provide a dedicated northbound right-turn lane and separated westbound left- and right-turn lanes. This would improve intersection operations to acceptable levels as outlined in the TMP. It may be desirable to provide turn lanes for all approaches and make this intersection an all-way stop-controlled intersection to be consistent with the 212th Avenue Southeast/Southeast 20th Street intersection to the south.
- 3. Upgrade the 218th Avenue Southeast/Southeast 8th Street Corridor.** This route comprises the main road corridor west of Town Center, and is comprised of two-lane roads with minimal shoulders or no shoulders. The corridor is not built to current City standards given the lack of shoulders and pedestrian facilities. This roadway currently has a relatively low volume with capacity to accommodate the additional traffic from the Town Center, but with the anticipated increase in vehicular traffic, consideration should be given to improving pedestrian and bicycle safety along this roadway. This could include providing paved shoulders, sidewalks or pedestrian paths, and bicycle lanes to allow safe and efficient mobility for pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- 4. Promote sustainable transportation options.** Promoting a variety of strategies for getting around Sammamish will help to mitigate the fully-built-out Town Center's impacts on 228th Avenue Southeast and other relevant off-site transportation corridors. The City's Climate Action Plan emphasizes a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, and encourages non-motorized transportation investment through targeted community outreach, engagement, and education.

Community Design

Community design is the visual and experiential glue that unites differing land uses, buildings, public spaces, and natural features into a cohesive and welcoming Town Center. This section of the Plan outlines approaches for achieving the appropriate balance of these elements that will ultimately lead to development that feels harmonious, people-centered, and reflective of local identity.

Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

Since the adoption of the 2008 Plan, a limited number of apartments, retail establishments, open spaces, and public amenities have been constructed. Yet disparate ownership patterns across the wider Town Center and lengthy development times have left large physical gaps between these projects, preventing a unified urban design scheme from taking hold.

Most new development in the Town Center has occurred on or near the intersection of 228th Avenue Southeast and Southeast 4th Street. This includes the streetscape improvements to Southeast 4th Street, the SKY Sammamish apartments, and Sammamish Village retail center. The Sammamish Townhomes to the south and SAMM apartments to the north round out the new development to date, and the Brownstones West townhomes at the west end of Southeast 4th Street have recently broken ground. However, much of the Town Center area remains unbuilt, and major gaps exist between what has already been constructed. With so much undeveloped area, evaluating the design of recent improvements can provide a limited amount of insight into the overall design of Town Center.

Figure 37. Setbacks from 228th Avenue Southeast



Google, 2024

Most developments are set back a significant distance from 228th Avenue Southeast. While this may mitigate the noise and pollution from vehicular traffic, this also contributes to a less-than-ideal pedestrian experience, particularly when walking or biking alongside the city's main arterial. The Sammamish Townhomes, for example, sit almost 100 feet back from the sidewalk. The horseshoe-like street that loops through the Townhomes does not interface with any other roadways, and live-work units all face the interior of the development. Meanwhile, pedestrians and cyclists are routed towards the busy and noisy 228th Avenue Southeast for access to the rest of Town Center.

Similarly, most retail entries within the mixed-use Sammamish Village development face inward, towards the surface parking that forms its heart, and do not engage with the street. Sammamish Village is home to many businesses, including a major grocer, medical pavilion, and a handful of smaller chain and local restaurants and retailers, yet only one of these directly faces SE 4th, and none face 228th. Pedestrians on SE 4th at 228th are instead faced with large blank walls, utility boxes, and double-width driveways, as opposed to the variety of uses and textures that would support a walkable pedestrian district.

Figure 38. Northwest corner of SE 4th St and 228th Avenue Southeast



Google, 2024

Many diagrams and renderings in the 2008 Town Center Plan and 2009 Town Center Infrastructure Plan were conceptual in nature. They were not intended to represent specific designs, land plan layouts, or layouts and locations of the street infrastructure that would emerge in concert with development. Often, general planning concepts in the 2008 Plan tended to use illustrative photos and general inferences rather than objective standards, and as a result, they are difficult to consistently interpret or apply.

Furthermore, many concepts are not achievable in full, particularly given the topography, sensitive areas, and costs associated with engineering and construction. This mismatch has contributed to the

lack of consistency and predictability in reviews and approvals, including at times the UZDP process, which has caused confusion and delay of the project permitting process. Today, these diagrams and renderings are outdated and no longer align with the new priorities being addressed by this plan update.

Strategy

Because the vision for the Town Center encompasses design objectives at the center, district, and human scales, the design strategy for creating an attractive, vibrant heart for the city includes measures to address all three levels. This Town Center Plan establishes the structural framework and large-scale design elements necessary to produce an inviting and walkable central district and identifies the general location and character of the various public facilities, parks and open spaces, streets, and trails.

Urban Form

Many attractive and successful downtown areas are developed over time, changing organically alongside the needs of the community. A rich mix of architectural styles, adaptable uses, and local history and identity all become ingrained in these places as they evolve. One major challenge facing Town Center, or any urban center built from scratch, is the feeling of “sameness” that can arise without a history of incremental growth. The Plan therefore seeks to find an appropriate balance between architectural flexibility, aesthetic variety, and visual consistency that contributes to a distinct identity for Town Center. To achieve this, the Plan emphasizes the following design principles:

- **Visual Cohesion** - Even though architectural diversity is encouraged, the Town Center’s overall design should appear coordinated, balancing creativity with consistency in scale, materials, storefront design, and integration into the natural environment.
- **Pedestrian-Scale Frontages** - From sidewalk widths to entryways, frontages must affirm that Town Center is a safe and welcoming place for pedestrians first and foremost. Large blank walls and uniformly massive structures are discouraged, especially at street level.
- **Cultural Identity** - Public art, interpretive signage, and historical references help preserve Sammamish’s heritage, particularly the legacy of the Sammamish and Snoqualmie peoples, and create pride of place for current residents.

Architectural Styles and Materials

The Sammamish Plateau, a tranquil environment set amid forests and lakes, lends itself to natural materials and warmer color palettes. While the City does not mandate a single architectural style, the updated code offers design standards that require:

- **Façade Articulation** - Breaking down larger buildings into segments, with variations in rooflines, setbacks, and material transitions, can sculpt them into more visually interesting and digestible components at the pedestrian scale. This approach enriches Town Center’s

streetscape while providing opportunities for individual buildings to express their identities through shifts in color, texture, and geometry.

- **Active Frontages** - Requiring appropriate frontage treatments at the street level, especially in the Urban Core, creates visual interest and engagement for pedestrians. Storefronts act as important interfaces between public and private space, and should make use of display windows, recessed entries, and other engaging treatments to draw people in.
- **Stepbacks at Upper Floors** - Recognizing the need for a comfortable human scale, taller buildings must employ upper-level stepbacks to bring them away from the street edge. Stepping back these upper floors avoids overwhelming the street and reduces overshadowing on the sidewalks below.
- **Appropriate Ground-Floor Height** - At the street level, ground floors must be designed with generous floor-to-ceiling heights (e.g., 14-16 feet clear) to provide the flexibility needed for interior layouts and uses to evolve over time. Regulations for ground-level use will allow both residential and retail spaces, and this increased height will accommodate signage, mechanical equipment, and potential future adaptive reuse for these spaces should market conditions shift.
- **Durable, Sustainable Materials** - The use of natural materials such as wood or stone accentuates Northwest design traditions and reflects the community's love of the environment. These can be used in combination with modern high-performance materials that reduce environmental impact, including mass timber, and come together through sustainable construction and green building standards and incentives.

Streetscape Activation

One of the most visible aspects of community design is how building façades and storefronts engage the sidewalk. The Town Center's form-based code includes provisions for:

- **Frequent Entrances** - Requiring doors at regular intervals along commercial façades helps avoid long, monotonous walls. Where walls are unavoidable, they should be treated with murals, vines, windows, or architectural detailing to add visual interest.
- **Signage and Awnings** - Thoughtful sign regulations encourage pedestrian-scale signage, while incorporating awnings or canopies provides both weather protection and architectural variation.
- **Natural Landscaping** - Incorporating sustainable landscaping into the streetscape, through native plantings and treatments like bioswales and rain gardens, can beautify sidewalks while providing natural stormwater management. These living elements anchor buildings and streets into the surrounding environment, and underscore Town Center's commitment to environmental resilience.

Figure 39. University Village provides a lively mix of active uses and storefronts to engage passersby



Google, 2021

To further enliven Town Center, the Plan advocates for sidewalk cafés, street vendors, plazas, and flexible open-air retail:

- **Sidewalk Width and Café Zones** - Where pedestrian streets or greenways have expanded sidewalk widths, a small outdoor seating zone can be accommodated without impeding pedestrian circulation.
- **Parklets and Temporary Activations** - The City may permit conversion of a few on-street parking spaces into temporary parklets - small, elevated platforms offering seating, greenery, and social space.
- **Plazas** - A centrally-located Town Square will provide both programmed and unprogrammed activity, and act as a community living room for small gatherings and large-scale events alike.

Figure 40. Open-air retail helps to activate the pedestrian corridors in the Woodinville Schoolhouse District



Woodinville Schoolhouse District

Transitions to Surrounding Neighborhoods

While the Urban Core can allow taller, denser development, the Plan acknowledges the need to ease the visual and experiential transition towards Town Center’s adjacent single-family neighborhoods. Specifically, updates to the Plan and Code include:

- **Green Buffers and Setbacks** - Near the boundaries of Town Center, vegetation strips, landscaping, and other mitigation strategies can reduce noise, improve privacy, and visually blend new multi-family buildings into existing areas to create a sense of transition.
- **Building Height Step-Downs** - Taller structures abutting low-density residential uses can utilize a building height “step down” within a defined buffer distance to provide transition to adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Tree Retention** - Thoughtful tree retention requirement updates for areas outside of the Urban Core will help better maintain Sammamish’s forested identity.
- **Lower-Intensity Uses** - At a district-wide scale, the Garden Mixed and Urban Mixed zones help transition the intensity of uses away from large-format commercial buildings and towards neighborhood-scale retail and middle housing areas directly adjacent to lower-density residential neighborhoods.

Public Art and Cultural Expression

Public art in the Town Center offers a chance to showcase Sammamish’s heritage and contribute to the story of the city. Instead of treating arts and culture as an afterthought, the Plan aims to integrate creative works into building designs, plazas, and everyday infrastructure. Possible initiatives include:

- **Art Walks and Sculptures** - Key pedestrian corridors can act as places of discovery, where small-scale sculptures, murals, or artistic street furnishings can foster interest and identity for Town Center.
- **Functional Art** - Examples include artist-designed benches, bike racks, or wayfinding signs that enhance aesthetic appeal while serving practical purposes.
- **Tribal Collaboration** - Partnership with the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe can showcase culturally relevant art, interpretive signs, or landscape features that celebrate local Indigenous history.

Figure 41. Public art and sculpture, such as Synergy Rising, can act as distinguishing features that ground Town Center and contribute to its identity.



Google, 2024

Ensuring Quality

Updated Guidelines and Standards

The City is shifting from a discretionary approach to clearer, form-based code that regulates façade modulation, building entries, site landscaping, and other physical design elements. These reduce uncertainty, as applicants can anticipate the design expectations and creative options that meet City objectives, but also maintain flexibility, as applicants could propose alternative solutions if they align with the guideline’s intent (e.g., “equivalent or better” design approaches).

Streamlined Process

Replacing the cumbersome Unified Zone Development Plan (UZDP) for small sites with a simpler administrative design review helps promote quicker approvals and more creativity in project types. Larger, multi-phase developments still undergo a master plan review, but with clearer design metrics around public realm enhancements, transitions, and environmental considerations.

A Town Center That Feels Like Home

Great urban design is about more than aesthetics; it directly shapes residents’ sense of safety, comfort, and belonging. As Sammamish continues to evolve, thoughtful community design ensures that new development meshes with the city’s cherished character. Tree-lined corridors, inviting storefronts, and thoughtful transitions out from the Urban Core form the building blocks of a place that supports daily life, where families can shop and dine, neighbors gather in pocket parks, and everyone feels at home strolling along safe, attractive streets.

Goals and Policies

Goal TCD-1 - Create a “sense of place” reflected in building forms, development patterns, and the public realm.

TCD-1.1 - The City should adopt design and development standards for the Town Center consistent with this plan, addressing the following:

- Promoting a variety of housing types across a range of affordability levels.
- Emphasizing human scale, fine detailing, quality building materials, and an inviting appearance in new buildings.
- Providing for appropriate transitions between dissimilar uses and intensities.
- Orienting development to adjacent streets and public open spaces by providing inviting entries and transparent windows facing the street/public open space.
- Emphasizing landscaping as a prominent design element of development.
- Providing an attractive and connected system of sidewalks, trails, and pathways throughout the Town Center.
- Restricting the amount of surface parking permitted for all development types.
- Promoting convenient vehicular circulation without negatively impacting the pedestrian environment and visual character of the area.
- Emphasizing design techniques that enhance personal safety.
- Providing for a hierarchy of open spaces throughout the Town Center.

TCD-1.2 - Landscaping and natural elements should play a prominent role in the Town Center’s overall identity, and landscape design standards should be an important part of public facilities, streets, and private development.

TCD-1.3 - Aesthetics should be an important consideration for public infrastructure, including streets, utilities, and public facilities. Service elements and mechanical equipment should be sited and designed to minimize impacts on the visual environment and surrounding uses.

TCD-1.4 - Foster design excellence by incentivizing high standards in the design, sustainability, and construction quality of buildings.

TCD-1.5 - Establish a master plan concept review process through which community members, developers, architects, and City staff can work together to ensure that new projects contribute positively to the Town Center.

Goal TCD-2 - Maximize the benefits of natural assets, including topography, vegetation, and views, to enhance Town Center's sense of place and environmental resilience.

TCD-2.1 - Encourage building forms and site layouts that capitalize on natural topography, respect native vegetation, and take advantage of prominent views. Where appropriate, incentivize the installation of renewable energy technology such as solar panels to enhance resilience and reduce GHG emissions.

TCD-2.2 - Plan for cultural events and community gathering spaces that emphasize inclusion and accessibility by limiting topographic challenges, with particular emphasis on the future Town Square.

TCD-2.3 - Incentivize retention of existing trees for development projects. If tree retention is not possible, use thoughtful mitigation techniques including replanting or median greening to proactively remediate the urban canopy.

TCD-2.4 - Prioritize planting of native or climate resilient plant and tree species. Consider plant growth and life cycles to ensure healthy and mature-looking planted areas, and support planted vegetation with adequate irrigation and drainage, root space, and nutrient rich soil.

Recommended Implementation Actions

Adopt a form-based code - Emphasize functional and aesthetic excellence for new Town Center development through adoption of a form-based code. Use design standards to regulate implementation of the elements described above in this chapter.

Develop roadway standards with streetscape elements - Streets in the Town Center should be attractive to travel and an optimal setting for new development.

Study and implement a Green Building Incentive – Projects using sustainable materials like mass timber, integrating renewable energy sources, or being constructed to LEED-equivalent standards can all contribute towards to the City’s Climate Action Plan goals and to a sense of cohesive design intent in Town Center.

Construct a Town Square – A centrally located Town Square will help build a Town Center-specific identity and contribute to a sense of pride for residents (for more on the Town Square, see the Civic, Cultural, and Commercial Uses Element).

Public Space, Parks, and Trails

Objectives

Sammamish’s vision for the Town Center emphasizes establishing a hierarchy of interconnected public and private open spaces, ranging from an active central plaza to less formal gathering areas, quiet residential courts, and beautiful open spaces. Additionally, community members continue to emphasize the importance of public recreational and community facilities, such as gymnasiums, performing arts centers, and community centers. Protecting and enhancing natural resources, view corridors, and other amenities within the open space network is a third objective.

Finally, parks, trails, and recreational facilities are key to enhancing human health. Walkability, in particular, is a proven means to reduce occurrences of cardiovascular disease and childhood obesity, and this plan’s emphasis on trails and sidewalks will contribute to Town Center’s goal of being a healthy and active community.

Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

In 1999, the City began purchasing land area for the Sammamish Commons, thereby securing the central amenity around which the Town Center will continue to develop. The construction of City Hall, with its plaza, view corridors, and adjacent recreational amenities (including a skateboard park, basketball court, picnic area, aquatic center, and playground), adds activity and access to the Commons’ eastern edge.

Topography and Critical Areas

The Town Center is located on varied topography with little level land. It encompasses wooded stream channels, protected wetlands, and portions of King County-designated Wildlife Habitat Network. These natural features are both assets and challenges, presenting opportunities to engage with and protect nature while making it difficult to provide athletic fields and an accessible connected trail system.

Sammamish Commons

The Sammamish Commons is the central amenity around which the Town Center was planned to be built. Since the adoption of the 2008 Plan, the Sammamish Commons has gained many more amenities, with distinct areas now referred to as the Upper Commons Park and the Lower Commons Park. In the Upper Commons, the addition of the Community & Aquatics Center and a King County Library contribute to the vision of a vibrant City Hall Plaza with active edges that were laid out in the Town Center Plan. City Hall Plaza now serves as the location for Sammamish’s summer weekly Farmers Market, and the Upper Commons also includes a skate park, basketball court, and play area.

The Lower Commons now includes a community garden, native plant garden, playground, picnic shelters, and a spray park along its loop path. Upgrades and expansions to this playground are anticipated in the coming years.

Notch Property

The Notch Property is a City-owned parcel adjacent to and north of the Lower Commons Park. Various planning concepts have been prepared for this site to consider how it may be best related to future development, linking the future Urban Core district and the Sammamish Commons and municipal campus. While no definitive approach has been established, the Notch remains an important opportunity for the Town Center.

Athletic Fields

The original Town Center Plan suggested addressing the limited availability of flat land for sports fields via cooperative agreements with local schools. Town Center and other Sammamish residents have access to Eastlake Community Fields and Inglewood Middle School Community Fields through a school-city partnership. These fields provide nearly 15 acres of play space and are located approximately 1.1 miles from Sammamish Commons. There are also fields at Skyline High School, which are 0.3 miles from the Commons. The Issaquah School District oversees the scheduling of these fields. The City may still desire to provide additional fields that can be accessed at any given time.

Trails

The trail map delineated in the 2008 Plan is a conceptual diagram that illustrates the general goal of an interconnected network of key City trails, pedestrian trails (public sidewalks and walkways), and local trails (which may be privately developed but publicly accessible). Connecting Town Center with Big Rock Park North, which opened in 2011, has been challenging in that the connection requires pedestrian easements through private subdivisions; as of publication, only the latter of these has been secured. The 2024 PROS Plan includes this trail connection project on the Capital Improvement Projects list for 2025.

Strategy

Town Center’s future open space system is anticipated to do more than simply offer recreational opportunities for city residents. Town Center’s parks, trails, and open spaces will also play an important ecological role, serving as an excellent setting for public facilities, providing gathering places, and connecting the area with the rest of Sammamish. Rather than being seen as only a recreational and visual amenity, the envisioned open space system serves as an important structural, form-giving element, organizing development, providing access, and maintaining the watershed’s ecological processes.

Sammamish Commons

With the addition of the King County Library branch and the Sammamish Community & Aquatic Center to the area adjacent to City Hall, the Sammamish Commons and nearby amenities are coalescing into a vibrant civic hub. The eventual development of the Urban Core area (along SE 4th Street) therefore presents a generational opportunity to create a strong pedestrian and visual connection between the civic campus and the economic heart of Town Center. This connection would traverse some potentially difficult topography, which could be remedied by a series of landscaped terraces from City Hall Plaza through the Commons and up towards SE 4th St, acting similarly to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant switchback route west of City Hall.

Green Spine

The Town Center Plan recommends a pedestrianized urban pathway, extending from the Lower Commons to Southeast 4th Street and moving north through the Urban Core, to connect the civic hub and Urban Core area. This feature would provide an organizing structure for new development, act as a foundation for a dedicated non-motorized trail, add visual and recreational amenity, and mitigate stormwater runoff. In doing so, this “Green Spine” would help solidify the Town Center as the sustainable and attractive heart of Sammamish.

The 2008 Plan identified the importance of such a connection, and to fill that role, first proposed the Green Spine as a linear open space between 60 and 120 feet wide.⁸ The 2009 Sammamish Town Center Infrastructure Plan (TCIP) expanded on the Green Spine concept, integrating it with other key features like the Town Square and tasking the private sector with dedicating the majority of their open space to the Green Spine.

However, these requirements have often clashed against real estate market conditions. The 2008 Plan and TCIP could not have predicted the realities of private development nearly twenty years into the future, and the level of ownership consolidation in the Town Center runs directly contrary to the

⁸ For reference, a King County Metro articulated bus (a “double bus” or “bendy bus” with accordion joints in the middle that allow the coach to bend) is 60 feet long.

disparate land ownership patterns anticipated by these plans. An open space the size of the Green Spine, blocks long and very wide, cuts deeply into the revenue-generating potential of a given project. Such a requirement can impact development feasibility to the point of unviability given the amount of open space dedication necessary. As a result, nearly two decades later the Green Spine has yet to materialize.

Despite these past difficulties, a non-motorized connection through the Town Center is still a critical component of the community’s vision for the area. A safe and accessible Green Spine would form the heart of a new walkable civic and commercial district, connecting key public destinations and providing the cohesion needed to support vibrant street life in the area. A flexible and context-sensitive approach to building the Green Spine, one that reflects both the original vision and today’s realities, will be necessary for it to fully realize as a unifying feature of Town Center.

The Green Spine might vary in size and character from block to block, but would provide an attractive setting for residences, public facilities, and businesses, especially those that benefit from exterior amenities such as restaurants and cafes. By connecting the civic and economic cores of Town Center, the Green Spine could also serve as a public gathering space or setting for fairs, sales, and other events, and a place to highlight public art and provide wayfinding for residents and visitors.

Figure 42. The Atlanta Beltline is a multimodal green corridor that both unifies and beautifies the city.



Framework, 2024

As Sammamish plans for a more urban Town Center, the future Green Spine will serve as an active, vibrant centerpiece, supporting the multitude of activities that take place in a downtown-style district. This means incorporating flexible spaces for public events and gatherings, establishing seating and play areas, and providing quality walking and biking paths that connect to Sammamish’s

broader trail system. It also means designing the Green Spine to encourage “spillover” from adjacent businesses and creating inviting transitions between public and private spaces. To that end, the Green Spine should be wide enough to comfortably accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic, but narrow enough to allow for small seating areas, transitions to retail, and other such pedestrian pockets to populate its edges where appropriate. Because this depends on the nature and scale of development along the Green Spine, the City and private developers should cooperatively decide on its exact dimensions and amenities that fit the overall development scheme of the Urban Core.

One critical consideration in designing the Green Spine is building a safe and comfortable environment for diverse uses, including walking, cycling, and emerging micromobility modes like e-bikes and scooters. Mixing all these users in a single path can lead to safety hazards due to their conflicting speeds, particularly in high-traffic areas near civic spaces or along commercial frontages. To ensure safety while enabling multimodal access, the Green Spine will incorporate clearly delineated lanes, for example through distinct paving materials, subtle grade separations, landscaping buffers, painted markings, or other means. A two-track design, with one side prioritized for slower pedestrian activities and passive uses, and the other side for wheeled movement, can balance the competing needs of these groups while maintaining a unified aesthetic. This approach would enhance predictability, reduce conflict points, and reinforce the Green Spine as public connector intended for all.

Even in an active urban setting, the Green Spine can still play a role in managing Town Center’s stormwater through a spectrum of rain gardens, dry wells, and other facilities. By blending ecological function with urban activity, providing spaces for native plants, and contributing to the Town Center’s tree canopy, the space can serve as a modern urban greenway - a linear pathway that stays true to Sammamish’s ecological values, supporting community life and providing active multimodal transportation options.

Town Square

Dotted with bustling storefronts, cafes, and businesses spilling into the public realm, and opening onto the Town Center’s premier park, the Town Square is instantly recognizable as the heart of the city. It is highly visible and functionally accessible as an integral extension of the Town Center’s pedestrian network, sitting between the Civic campus and Urban Core, and adjacent to the Green Spine. Centered around the City’s current “Notch” property, the Town Square is envisioned as a hardscaped plaza at the northern end of the Sammamish Commons, providing a transition from the landscaped open space of the Commons into the lively environment of the Urban Core.

A variety of forms, colors, and textures help activate the space, incorporating public art and sculpture, gathering spaces, and a range of different places to sit. Site amenities and features, including benches, seat-walls, lighting, and plantings, are arranged to provide versatility accommodating large community events (e.g., summer weekly Farmer’s Market, Fourth on the Plateau, etc.) while encouraging casual, more impromptu daily gatherings and social interaction. The flexibility of the adjacent open space combined with the Town Square’s central location together create countless opportunities for future amenities.

As a major hub of public life located on City-owned property, the Town Square will be a City-led and funded project. The final design will be determined through future planning efforts that incorporate community feedback and consider planned development in and around the Notch property.

Additional Plazas and Open Spaces

While the Town Center's western half will be well served with parks and open spaces, the portion east of 228th Avenue Southeast will need to be more intentional about creating and distributing open space. Smaller plazas, greens, or squares will serve the various mixed-use developments and residential clusters and should be created alongside the development of projects. These spaces can range in size from a small pocket park to a half-acre or more, depending upon the Town Center's configuration and needs.

Lower-density development outside the Urban Core should include common open space as described in the updated Town Center Code or provide immediate access to quality shared open spaces. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines are particularly applicable and should be applied to internal and public pathways wherever feasible. Open spaces may be a combination of active recreation, passive recreation, and natural areas, while ideally providing stormwater management and other ecological functions.

Trails and Pedestrian Walkways

The City of Sammamish's 2024 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, while providing an ambitious overall trail network for the City, only conceives of one trail through the future Town Center. The development of the Town Center offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to develop critical pedestrian and bicycle links that will benefit the whole city. Many of the off-street trails could follow wetland or stream channel buffers, constructed within Critical Area tracts resulting from private development and dedicated to the City. The City should obtain easements or purchase these buffers outright for trail development.

Three different types of pedestrian and bicycle facilities are recommended:

- **Primary Trails** - This includes both major City-developed off-street trails that connect different areas in the Town Center and primary trails extending to other parts of the city. These should be all-weather hard-surfaced to provide excellent access for those with limited mobility. In some segments, pedestrian lighting should be considered.
- **Secondary Trails** - Constructed as part of private development, these trails provide connections primarily for those living, working, or visiting the development, although they will be accessible to the general public. The location and design of trails in mixed-use areas should be identified in the master plans for these areas.
- **Streets with Sidewalks and Bicycle Lanes** - Streets in Town Center will include relatively wide sidewalks (8 to 12 feet wide), bicycle lanes, and substantial street trees separating vehicular traffic from pedestrians. Generally, these designated streets can later be connected to other

citywide bicycle and pedestrian routes, or provide convenient non-motorized circulation within the center.

Natural Areas

The Town Center site includes large, vegetated corridors along streams and wetlands that are important for wildlife corridors, visual quality, and stream corridor ecology. These corridors are protected through the City's Critical Areas Ordinance. Acquiring easements and/or land for trail construction, stormwater management facilities, or environmental enhancement may be useful as future strategies for consistent long-term stewardship of these critical areas. For example, reforestation of portions of the Ebright Creek and George Davis Creek corridors would increase habitat connectivity and improve water quality.

Draft Document Note: Underlined text represents key updates made to Goals, Policies, and Recommended Implementation Actions

Goals and Policies

Goal TOS-1: Create a hierarchy of interconnected public and private open spaces, promoting community gathering, active recreation, environmental sustainability, and neighborhood-scale amenities.

TOS-1.1 Prioritize and require accessible, functional, and attractive public open spaces throughout Town Center through development regulations.

TOS-1.2 Emphasize the civic focus of Sammamish Commons by providing spaces for cultural gathering, including the development of a Town Square.

TOS-1.3 A variety of smaller-scale open spaces should be developed as part of private development to serve local needs.

Goal TOS-2: Construct a network of accessible trails and pathways in the Town Center that connects sections of the city's expanding trail system.

TOS-2.1 Prioritize the integration of multi-modal trails, dedicated pedestrian pathways, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks into the city's wider transportation network. (See also the Mobility & Streets Element, pg. 49).

TOS-2.2 Make use of wetland buffer areas to accommodate new public trails, delivering environmental enhancement to these areas and allowing for consistent long-term stewardship of those areas.

Goal TOS-3: Construct a set of high-quality public service and recreational facilities to serve city residents.

TOS-3.1 Civic facilities are critical to the vibrancy of the Town Center, and should be included in the City's planning efforts.

TOS-3.2 Public facilities, government resources and facilities, community centers, and other civic amenities and services should be located adjacent to or near the Sammamish Commons.

Recommended Implementation Actions

- 1. Begin planning the Green Spine and Town Square.** As the premier multimodal connector and open space in Town Center, the Green Spine and Town Square should be thoughtfully planned in conjunction with current development proposals. Development of the Town Square in particular, being on City-owned land adjacent to the Commons, should be prioritized in a City-led design process, and in doing so, could anchor and influence future development in the immediate vicinity.
- 2. Refine the trail plan.** Refine the proposed trail networks outlined in the PROS Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and prepare a plan that defines the public and private roles in funding and constructing primary and secondary trails.

- a. **Adopt design standards for trails and sidewalks.** Update street standards to include designs for trails and sidewalks, and ensure that these facilities are integrated into public and private planning efforts.
 - b. **Acquire easements and/or land area for key wetlands, stream corridors, and buffers.** Portions of wetlands, stream corridors, and buffers should be acquired for trails, ecological enhancement, and consistent long-term stewardship. It may be possible to use enhancement activities as mitigation for impacts on other lands.
3. **Continue planning for and siting civic facilities near the Sammamish Commons.** Consider acquisition of land for additional community facilities in the Civic Center district of Town Center. Explore opportunities to better connections between City Hall, the Sammamish Commons, and the adjacent Urban Core and Mixed Urban districts.

Civic, Cultural, and Commercial Uses

As Sammamish continues to grow and diversify, the Town Center will serve as a multifaceted hub for public life, combining civic institutions, cultural amenities, and thriving businesses. The updated Plan presents a significant opportunity to reimagine the civic, cultural, and commercial function of Town Center in a more integrated manner. Well-planned public facilities and civic anchors can catalyze economic development and community gathering, while arts and cultural programming enhance the area's social fabric, and commercial uses flourish through proactive strategies and integration with these other elements.

Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

Since the adoption of the original Town Center Plan, the municipal campus has developed into a key node of civic activity. With the addition of the library and Sammamish Community & Aquatic Center / YMCA to the campus, which also includes City Hall, these facilities together have become integral community gathering points which provide essential public services and programs. Commercial development, although still evolving, now includes retail, medical, dining, and service-oriented businesses at Sammamish Village, and a handful of small businesses are now established in the live-work units found in the Sammamish Townhomes.

While there has been substantial progress towards the creation of civic and commercial anchors, cultural amenities and programs remain relatively limited and underdeveloped. Limited venues and infrastructure for arts, cultural events, and other gatherings will restrict opportunities to engage the community, and not including cultural spaces would represent a missed opportunity to develop social cohesion and support economic vitality.

Additionally, the existing civic and commercial spaces are geographically dispersed, reflecting early development patterns characterized by fragmented land ownership and a piecemeal approach to project approvals. This uneven distribution of services and amenities takes away from the idea of a walkable mixed-use environment. Recent consolidation of properties, however, offers the opportunity to establish a more cohesive and integrated development pattern.

Economic feasibility will remain a persistent challenge for new commercial development, a trend that is being exacerbated by unfavorable market conditions, restrictive zoning standards, and limited incentives. The current environment therefore poses difficulties in attracting and sustaining the businesses and essential services necessary for creating a thriving commercial core.

Strategy

Public Facilities and Civic Anchors

Sammamish Commons and its surrounding public institutions - City Hall, the library, the Sammamish Community & Aquatic Center/YMCA, and any expanded or future facilities - exemplify how civic

anchors can shape a welcoming urban core. The Plan's vision is to cluster government services, cultural amenities, and community venues in this welcoming and walkable Town Center, drawing visitors and creating synergy with surrounding mixed-use retail, offices, and housing.

This also provides opportunities for the co-location of social services with civic facilities, and possible inclusion of a future performing arts or educational center, bringing a wide variety of resources for residents across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Another key dimension of civic life is the ability to gather for celebrations, learning, and performances, and the future Town Square is intended to provide this central, adaptable space for Sammamish. As a multi-purpose civic plaza, the Town Square would host concerts, farmers' markets, and cultural festivals year-round, and could be the dynamic heart of the Town Center's civic hub. Shared public spaces designed to accommodate rotating events, like an art fair one weekend and family movie nights the next, without extensive setup or road closures bring together residents from all walks of life.

Arts and Culture

Sammamish's Arts Commission has developed a broad Arts Strategic Plan that envisions a vibrant public art landscape, and cultural opportunities for all demographics. One of the aims of the Arts Strategic Plan is to continue to invest in high-quality and cohesive art, particularly in the Sammamish Commons and throughout Town Center. Possible strategies such as integrating public art into wayfinding and trails, into capital facilities projects, and into street design could significantly contribute to fostering a unique sense of place in Town Center. On larger projects, the Arts Commission can coordinate with cultural nonprofits, local businesses, and philanthropic organizations to co-sponsor events or fund large-scale public artworks.

Commercial Uses

Sammamish has historically lacked a central business district, with residents traveling to neighboring cities for jobs or specialty retail. The updated Town Center aims to reverse this pattern through the introduction of a hybrid form-based code, reducing barriers to production of mixed-use buildings. These hybrid standards will reduce much of the convoluted use restrictions in place, allowing a dynamic mix of cafes, offices, restaurants, personal services, and more that can adapt to changing market conditions. From small-scale storefronts to mid-sized offices, new developments in Town Center should cater to local entrepreneurs, co-working spaces, and sidewalk-activating businesses.

Retail success hinges on foot traffic, visibility, and alignment with surrounding uses. Typically, grocery stores or specialty food markets can serve as day-to-day anchors, attracting consistent patronage. With Metropolitan Market already in place, one next step is to begin attracting smaller-scale businesses. These include local professional offices such as those for accountants, real estate firms, financial services, specialty retail including bookshops or art collectives, restaurants, coffeehouses, and other such businesses. Clustering these smaller-scale businesses around high-

traffic pedestrian routes and major anchors would give patrons of the grocery store other places to visit, eat, shop, or just hang out while running errands.

When not in use, vacant parcels or wide sidewalks can be activated by sidewalk fairs, pop-up shops, and food trucks, giving local makers a chance to shine while the space awaits permanent occupancy.

Civic and Cultural Identity

Ensuring that civic, cultural, and commercial uses harmonize within the Town Center depends heavily on thoughtful design. Design principles that would most contribute to a “Town Center identity” are:

- **Architectural Cohesion.** Public facilities, cultural venues, and nearby commercial buildings should use complementary materials or façade treatments, establishing a recognizable “Town Center look” without stifling creativity.
- **Wayfinding and Gateways.** Clear signage, consistent branding, and thematic elements (e.g., a sculpture or overhead banner) at main entry points orient visitors and highlight the area’s civic and cultural focus.
- **Integrated Public Space.** Whenever civic or commercial buildings abut open spaces, design guidelines require visually porous façades, seating areas, and wide sidewalks to blur the line between indoor and outdoor life.

A thriving Town Center blends civic, cultural, and commercial dimensions into one seamless tapestry of public life, creativity, and economic opportunity. By situating robust public facilities and cultural venues near shops, restaurants, and professional services, Sammamish can foster a true downtown where residents gather for official business, learning, entertainment, and everyday errands. Through strategic partnerships, design guidelines, and incentives, the City can ensure these uses reinforce one another, bringing fresh energy to the heart of Sammamish.

Goals and Policies

Goal CCC-1: Develop a vibrant civic core that houses essential public facilities, cultural institutions, and year-round gathering spaces.

CCC-1.1: Locate or expand government and cultural venues (e.g., libraries, performance spaces) close to each other to increase foot traffic and ease of access, responding to increased demand as more residents move to Town Center.

CCC-1.2: Partner with local nonprofits and regional agencies to bring educational, health, and social services into new or existing civic facilities.

Goal CCC-2: Promote a dynamic mix of commercial uses that leverage civic and cultural anchors, supporting economic vitality and local entrepreneurship.

CCC-2.1: Support a range of retail, office, and artisanal production uses in ground-floor storefronts, especially in the Urban Core.

CCC-2.2: Encourage integration of a limited number of new performance venues or cultural facilities through public-private partnerships.

Goal CCC-3: Enhance the Town Center's identity through public art, design cohesion, and integrated open spaces that celebrate Sammamish's diversity and heritage.

CCC-3.1: Incorporate public art, interpretive elements, or historical markers in gateway areas, plazas, wayfinding, and primary walkways, reflecting Sammamish's cultural narrative.

CCC-3.2: Ensure that civic and cultural buildings incorporate consistent design themes and materials, while still allowing for creative expression.

Goal CCC-4: Design flexible spaces that can adapt to seasonal and cultural events, fostering year-round activation.

CCC-4.1: Create design standards for civic plazas and commercial frontages that allow for vendor stalls, pop-up retail, or temporary cultural exhibitions without compromising pedestrian circulation.

CCC-4.2: Require outdoor gathering spots have ample sun and rain cover to shield visitors from the elements and to allow civic or cultural events to spill onto the street more easily.

Recommended Implementation Actions

1. Integrate public art with new public facilities projects and expansions.
2. Explore partnerships with local or regional arts/culture organizations and educational institutions.
3. Update the Town Center code to allow broader ground-floor uses, especially in prime pedestrian areas.
4. Reduce barriers to small-scale businesses, such as craft workshops or maker studios, by streamlining permit processes.
5. Dedicate space within new or expanded civic buildings for rotating social service providers (e.g., job training, food assistance).
6. Coordinate with King County and local nonprofits to pool resources for potentially co-located service facilities.
7. Draft design guidelines for new public spaces detailing seating, landscaping, overhead weather protection, signage, and event infrastructure (power, water, lighting).
8. Through updates to the Sammamish Municipal Code and use of City-owned public spaces, encourage flexible, multi-purpose layouts for events like farmers' markets, outdoor concerts, and food truck gatherings.
9. Explore creating a programming plan for the Sammamish Commons and major central open spaces or plazas in Town Center.
10. Implement coherent signage and lighting that emphasize Sammamish's civic core and cultural amenities.
11. Collaborate with the Public Works Department to integrate safe pedestrian routes, wide sidewalks, and ample crossing infrastructure in Town Center.
12. Track new civic/cultural facility usage and commercial vacancy rates to assess synergy between public anchors and retail activity.

Capital Facilities

The ongoing development of Sammamish Town Center will require substantial capital improvements. This section describes capital facilities, including roads, utilities, and parks and recreation facilities necessary to support the proposed land uses described in this Plan. A fundamental purpose of the following discussion is to identify current conditions and priority projects for the future.

Conditions, Challenges, and Opportunities

The 2008 Plan includes a list of public investments summarizing capital facilities projects recommended for the Town Center. Of this list, only the stormwater facilities improvements to SE 4th Street have been completed to date. However, the remaining items on that list could be funded and implemented in the future.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

Transportation

Since the preparation of the original Town Center Plan, several roadway segments have been either constructed or improved that are in the vicinity of the Town Center, and which may contribute to capacity-serving vehicle trips to and from the Town Center. These segments include:

- East Lake Sammamish Parkway Northeast north of Inglewood Hill Road
- 212th Avenue Southeast south of Southeast 8th Street
- Southeast 4th Street west of 228th Avenue Southeast
- 228th Avenue Southeast north of Northeast 12th Street
- 228th Avenue Southeast south of Southeast 8th Street
- Southeast Duthie Hill Road east of Southeast Issaquah Beaver Lake Road
- Southeast Duthie Hill Road west of Trossachs Boulevard

Of these projects, the improvements to Southeast 4th Street are among the most significant, as this segment is in the heart of the Town Center. The upgrades to Southeast 4th Street, between 218th Avenue Southeast and 228th Avenue Southeast, provide increased opportunity for access and development within the Urban Core area thanks to its transformation into a multimodal corridor. Furthermore, major stormwater and sewer facilities were integrated into this Plan, and powerlines and overhead utility wires were undergrounded.

Currently planned transportation projects include connectors in the northwest, northeast, and southeast quadrants of the Town Center, helping to improve circulation and remove pressure from 228th Avenue Southeast. The Northeast Connector, which extends Southeast 1st Place eastward and then connecting to Crusader Way to the south, is slated for construction in 2027-2029. SE 6th Street is planned for expansion during that period as well, but additional connectors are not yet funded per the 2025-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The recently adopted Citywide Transit Plan identifies several places in or adjacent to the Town Center that are missing pedestrian crossings near transit stops. Implementing these pedestrian crossings, and any other improvements indicated by the Transit Plan's recommended crosswalk study, should be prioritized as part of future development.

Parks

The approximately 30-acre Sammamish Commons is the only City-owned park in the Town Center. The Commons has been designed as the central park/hub of the Sammamish parks system. The park's upper 10 acres include City Hall and the civic plaza. The lower 20 acres, with its wetlands and sloping terrain, is more suited for passive activities or as wildlife reserves.

Utilities

Water and sewer service to the Town Center is provided by the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) provides electricity and natural gas. Solid waste collection and disposal is provided by Republic Services.

Anticipated future water and sewer facilities were depicted in the 2008 Plan. These drawings, while conceptual, reflected the need to augment the then-existing facilities to provide water and sewer service for the intensified land uses proposed within the Town Center. At the time, it was anticipated that the water and sewer infrastructure within the proposed roads will cost approximately \$20 million (in 2007 dollars; roughly \$31 million in 2025 dollars). 40% of total spending would happen west of 228th Avenue Southeast, and 60% of spending east of 228th Avenue Southeast. Any new sewer mains within the Town Center area were intended to be 8-inch to 12-inch diameter, and all proposed development was to be served with gravity sewer service.

Additionally, the then-existing 8-inch water main on SE 4th Street required replacement with a 12-inch water main from 220th Avenue SE eastward to the end of an existing 12-inch water main, west of the intersection with 228th Avenue Southeast. The then-existing 2-inch water main on 224th Avenue SE required replacement with a network of 12-inch water mains to serve the commercial / mixed-use / multi-family area in the northwest quadrant of the Town Center.

Future Needs

Transportation

The City's 2025-2030 TIP identifies the following future projects located in the Town Center, some of which are funded and some of which remain unfunded:

- TR-126 Northeast Connector Road (funded)
- TR-134 6th Street (funded)
- TR-18 & TR-42: Southeast 8th/218th Ave Corridor Improvements (funded)
- TR-125 Southeast 4th Extension (Crusader Way) (unfunded)

- TR-124 Northwest Connector Road (unfunded)
- TR-127 Southeast Connector Road & New Signal at Southeast 8th (unfunded)

Parks

Development of the Town Square would be undertaken by the City on current City property (the Notch). Development of the Green Spine would be done in collaboration with private projects.

Utilities

Anticipated future water and sewer facilities within the Town Center Area will augment existing facilities to provide water and sewer service for the proposed land uses. Because the exact location, nature, and intensity of future development are difficult to identify with certainty, rather than speculate on the exact locations of future facilities, the plan recommends following the guidance of the [relevant comprehensive plans from the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District](#), which serves the area and is actively planning for additional residential and commercial capacity in Town Center.

Broadband

As called for in the Comprehensive Plan, Sammamish needs broad expansion of high-speed internet facilities. In today's digital age, broadband internet is not just a utility but a critical piece of infrastructure that enables economic growth and innovation. Development of broadband facilities should occur alongside project development in Town Center, supporting local businesses and remote workers, and providing a means through which all community members have equal opportunities to access and participate in the digital economy.

General Water and Sewer Facility Considerations

The Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District will collect connection charges for the provision of water and sewer service and facility improvements to new developments in the Town Center area. The costs for District-installed facilities may be recouped through collection of Local Facility Charges (LFCs) for water and sewer mains or Special LFCs for any larger mains required to serve non-single-family developments.

Processes to Install Water and Sewer Facilities

In situations where the City capital public works projects are used to construct new roads or other access routes, the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District expects to participate in and construct the new water and sewer facilities as a District Capital Improvement Project.

For situations where the roads or access routes are being constructed by a private developer, the developer would be required to install the new water and sewer facilities under a Developer Extension Agreement with the District. The developer is responsible for paying for the design,

permitting, and installation of the water and sewer facilities. If the facilities installed by the developer have the potential to provide direct service to other properties, the developer may enter into a Reimbursement Agreement with the District. This agreement allows reimbursement from those properties for a period of 15 years when they connect to the developer-constructed water/sewer facilities.

Water Facility Design Considerations

Water mains are normally located in roads and other access routes. Additional water mains may be required, depending on the layout of the buildings and appurtenance requirements for water service connections, irrigation, and fire protection. New water mains shall be looped wherever possible to improve reliability, fire protection, and water quality.

The size of the water mains required is determined in part by the development type. In general, single-family developments may be served by 8-inch diameter water mains, while all other types of development (commercial, multi-family, including townhomes, public/institutional, etc.) may be served by 12-inch diameter water mains. The urban nature of Town Center will therefore necessitate 12-inch diameter mains.

Existing Water Mains to Be Replaced

The existing 2-inch water main on 224th Avenue Southeast will need to be replaced with a network of 12-inch water mains to serve development in the Urban Core.

Sewer Facility Design Considerations

All proposed development should be served with gravity sewer service. Providing gravity sewer service may require that sewers be located on the downhill side of some buildings, particularly in the northwest portion of the Town Center area.

Sewers should be located within roadways or other access routes. Vehicular access must be provided to all manholes for maintenance, with either drive-through provisions or defined turnaround areas for large tractor trucks.

Level of Service (LOS) Standards

This Plan adopts the existing policies and LOS standards contained in the 2024 City of Sammamish Comprehensive Plan and 2024 Transportation Master Plan.

Priority Projects List

The table below details priority City capital projects within Town Center, not including other jurisdictions' public investments (essentially utilities), and private sector investment in infrastructure for development. As noted above and in the Transportation section, the development of the Town

Center will require capital investment within the planning area and may also require capital facilities investments beyond the Town Center boundaries.

These actions are generally projected to be constructed in parallel with Town Center development. Along with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, this list serves to guide the City’s ongoing 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

| Priority | Project | Description |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 1 | Northeast Connector Road (Funded – Phase A Only) | To support the growth of the Sammamish’s Town Center, new roadways connections are necessary. Each quadrant of the Town Center includes a plan for a new roadway connection to help improve circulation within the Town Center and alleviate some pressure on 228th Avenue Southeast, which is the main arterial through the area. |
| 2 | Town Square Design and Development (Unfunded) | Design and development of a Town Square in the City-owned Notch property immediately north of Sammamish Commons. |
| 3 | Green Spine Design (Unfunded) | Design and implementation plan for development of the Green Spine between Sammamish Commons, the future Town Square, and the future Mobility Hub. |
| 4 | Northwest Connector Road (Unfunded) | Connection from Southeast 4 th Street north and east to 228th Avenue Southeast. |
| 5 | 6th Street (Funded) | Located in the heart of Town Center, the 6th Street Improvement Project provides connectivity for the community as it unites a beloved public park with adjacent residential buildings, retail amenities, and a planned public plaza. |
| 6 | Southeast Connector Road & New Signal at Southeast 8th (Unfunded) | Connection from Southeast 8 th Street north to Crusader Way. |
| 7 | Southeast 8th/218th Ave Corridor Improvements (Funded) | Southeast 8th Street to Inglewood Hill Road Northeast is a critical corridor for existing and new residential developments; provides access to City Parks and Town Center; and is a popular walking area for many residents. Improvements |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | | to the corridor aim to improve traffic flow with traffic calming measures, non-motorized uses, and safety for all users. A corridor study is planned for 2026. |
| 8 | Southeast 4th Extension (Crusader Way) (Unfunded) | Improve Crusader Way as a public street to connect to the Southeast Connector Road. |
| 9 | Mobility Hub | Develop a Mobility Hub along 228 th Avenue SE in Town Center to expand integrated transportation options. |

Financing Overview

City investments required to support the development of Town Center will include continued capital investment in infrastructure located both within and outside of Town Center boundaries. In addition, annual City operational costs will increase as people and businesses move into Town Center, along with civic uses, such as parks, open space, and community services.

Implementation of the current 2025-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is estimated to cost approximately \$42 million in total City investment, with less than \$1 million currently funded.

City Capital Investments and Operating Costs

Capital Investments

Capital investments for infrastructure costs within Town Center include building the major arterials to circulate traffic and to facilitate access to activity nodes within Town Center. Costs may include right-of-way acquisition, road construction, and storm water management systems. This is true for City rights-of-way, but applies also for the expanded street network, much of which is not captured in the City’s TIP as those costs are expected to be borne by private development.

Revenues

Revenues to the City will increase with Town Center implementation, based on existing policies and tax laws. In addition, the City will adjust the citywide impact fees for transportation improvements based on capital costs for transportation citywide and increased development within Town Center. State and local laws require some revenue sources to cover capital costs only, while other sources cover operating costs.

Private Sector Development Costs of Infrastructure

On-site infrastructure costs borne by the property owners must also be considered as part of development. This is especially true in the Town Center, as much of the development will require private construction of access roads, utilities, trails, and landscaping.

Capital Infrastructure Financing Options

The adopted policy in Sammamish is to ensure that “growth pays proportionate costs of capital facilities required to serve the growth,” or, more simply, that “growth pays for growth.” (See Comprehensive Plan Goal TCF-7.) Current and future application of appropriate transportation and parks impact fees ensure proportionate shares among current residents and new growth.

To implement the Town Center Plan and integrate the financial costs and revenues with the City’s current financial program, including impact fees, some additional review and analysis will be necessary. Specific strategies will be developed and proposed along with the recommended implementing regulations.

In addition to impact fees, a number of financing options exist to provide the necessary facilities to serve the development contained in the Town Center Plan. The options may include:

- Local Improvement Districts (LID) that can finance public improvements for specific geographic areas.
- Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD). Revenues derived from such districts are used to provide transportation improvements for a specific geographic area.
- Acquisition of land, exchange of land, or leasing of land for infrastructure or to increase the feasibility of potential development.
- Bonding to provide for capital projects such as structured parking, supported by defined or general revenue streams.
- Latecomers fees, where the public sector can front the cost of infrastructure development and receive back developer fees as development occurs.
- Dedication of land as a developer requirement.
- Requirements for developers to construct specific site improvements that could include open space, trails, parking facilities, environmental mitigation improvements, roadways, etc.
- Incentives related to zoning that provide developers with increased development options if development is designed to achieve specific public policy goals.
- State funding currently related to projected revenue streams from retail sales tax.

Many of these options can be designed to maximize desired goals in the Plan. As a part of developing an implementation strategy for the Town Center Plan, the consultants and City staff will undertake a review of these options to determine which achieve the goals of the Plan with the greatest feasibility and effectiveness.

Goals and Policies

Goal TCF-1 - Ensure that capital improvement costs are distributed equitably.

TCF-1.1 - Establish funding distributions so that private development pays for itself, either in terms of direct improvement costs or in terms of long-term revenue to the City.

TCF-1.2 - Identify cost-effective financing mechanisms for public improvements. Explore potential sources of revenue, including local improvement districts, grants, impact fees, and other resources.

TCF-1.3 - Ensure that the Town Center capital project program is coordinated with the citywide CIP. Coordinate public expenditures with private investment to ensure effective leveraging of public investment.

TCF-1.4 - Identify appropriate development cost sharing for public and private sectors.

Goal TCF-2 - Ensure infrastructure and capital facilities are sufficient to support phased growth, housing, and economic development in the Town Center.

TCF-2.1 - Continue to evaluate and analyze the cost structure of development by enhancing and fine-tuning the City's economic model.

TCF-2.2 - Periodically re-evaluate land use provisions and adequacy of capital facilities to determine if the projected development can be supported. Revise land use policies and regulations if necessary so that new development can be supported with adequate facilities.

Goal TCF-3- Integrate high-quality stormwater systems into Town Center's parks and open spaces.

TCF-3.1 - When feasible, stormwater systems will be designed and built to serve as an amenity feature or habitat area and will include educational signage or materials about its function and habitat features.

TCF-3.2 - Encourage development projects to provide stormwater treatment solutions that are innovative. For those solutions not found in the current stormwater handbooks, explore an alternative compliance method for implementation if the solutions demonstrate an equal or greater benefit than a preexisting alternative.

Recommended Implementation Actions

1. **Update impact fees ordinance to provide for revenues anticipated in this Plan** - This is scheduled for 2025.
2. **Update annual Capital Improvement Programs** - Identify priority right-of-way projects in Town Center in the City's annual Capital Improvement Plans.
3. **Account for Town Center capital facilities element funding in the two-year budget process.**

Implementation & Monitoring

The 2025 Town Center Plan Update is more than a policy blueprint - it is a call to action. The primary strategies through which the City can bring the Plan's goals to life are through directing phased development, identifying and measuring key performance metrics, and following an adaptive management approach that reassesses the Plan into the future. These implementation and monitoring strategies will help Sammamish remain on track to achieve the community's vision of a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable Town Center.

Phased Development and Investment Strategy

Short-Term Priorities (1-5 Years)

In the short term, the City's focus is on immediate regulatory and infrastructure improvements. The City will adopt an updated Town Center Code that weaves together housing affordability goals, a form-based code framework, and revised street standards for Town Center. Redefined district boundaries will also be integrated into the Sammamish Municipal Code to streamline administration and better align with market development realities. Community members will also continue to be informed about Town Center projects via communications and updates on the City's Town Center webpage.

Regulatory Amendments

- **Adopt the Updated Town Center Code**, integrating the form-based framework, street standards, housing affordability requirements, and revised sub-districts into the Sammamish Municipal Code.
- **Sunset the Unified Zone Development Plan (UZDP) Process**, replacing it with clearer administrative reviews and/or development agreements.
- **Place affordable housing at the forefront**, bringing into effect preferred incentive programs, Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA), and in-lieu fee utilization for all development projects that include residential units.
- **Update the existing TDR Framework**, retaining the value of already-purchased credits while building a program more tailored to fit market realities.
- **Explore a sustainable building incentive**, creating a blended silo-style regulatory program that promotes land conservation, housing affordability, and housing diversity with green-built, energy-efficient housing.

Near-Term Capital Projects

- **Address key multimodal gaps** to link neighborhoods to Town Center, focusing on missing segments near future Mixed-Use Centers, schools, transit stops, and the Sammamish Commons.

- **Coordinate with Public Works and utilities providers** to identify immediate infrastructure upgrades needed to accommodate new projects in the Town Center Core.

Community Engagement

- **Perform educational outreach** to engage residents, property owners, and developers on the new regulations, incentives, and design guidelines. Promotional and educational materials will help contextualize code updates and new plan objectives.
- **Make use of pilot programming** in new or existing public spaces in Town Center, including pop-up vendors and markets, cultural fairs, and/or small concerts to activate sidewalks and plazas.

Mid-Term Progress (5-10 Years)

Over the medium term, the Plan envisions significant enhancements to the City's infrastructure and housing stock. Infrastructure improvements will include the creation of the Town Square, while transit enhancements developed in partnership with King County Metro will improve local connectivity. Durin this timeframe, the first wave of development projects will deliver a new stock of below-market-rate units and when mixed-use commercial activity will begin to flourish.

Expand Infrastructure

- Ensure that new developments contribute to the Town Square and make strong use of integrative stormwater features.
- Partner with King County Metro on new or expanded transit service for Town Center, such as a local shuttle service or improved bus frequencies.
- Develop a more comprehensive network of dedicated pedestrian and bicycle pathways, including multi-use paths, trails, and cycle tracks.
- Integrate electric vehicle charging, renewable energy sources, and other form of sustainable infrastructure into new development in Town Center.

Urban Core Development

- Facilitate local business growth by sharing parking solutions and streamlining permit approval processes. Mitigate the effects of empty storefronts while helping micro-businesses through a temporary pop-up incentive program, or identify other partnerships or ways to activate the streetscape.

Long-Term Outcomes (15+ Years)

In the longer term, the Plan anticipates development of mid-rise buildings and middle housing in Town Center. The seamlessly integrated pedestrian and bicycle paths, expanded transit options, and mixed-use amenities contribute to a dense and walkable neighborhood, enhancing the overall

sustainability of the city. The emergence of robust cultural and civic amenities will attract residents of Sammamish through year-round community programming and help to collectively foster a distinctive urban identity. Town Center development can position Sammamish as an even more desirable place to call home, celebrated for its high-quality design, thriving local commercial and cultural scene, and steadfast environmental integrity.

Key Metrics for Success

Monitoring tangible outcomes of the Plan is crucial for accurately assessing whether it delivers on its promises. The City will track metrics aligned with the Plan’s primary goals in order to review progress and identify a need to course-correct, if necessary.⁹ The quantity and nature of which metrics to track will depend on City resources, and will be determined at a later date. Examples of such metrics could be:

Housing and Affordability

- Number of new units built in the Town Center, categorized by type (e.g., apartments, middle housing, townhomes).
- Share of affordable units at or below various AMI levels (50-80% AMI, 30-50% AMI, and 0-30% AMI if applicable).
- Average rental and sales prices to gauge housing attainability trends.

Mobility and Streets

- Miles of completed sidewalks, trails, shared-use paths, and dedicated bike lanes.
- Pedestrian and cyclist counts at key intersections, measured before and after certain improvements are made.
- Transit ridership numbers in routes serving Town Center, or expansion of routes by King County Metro.
- Number of electric vehicle charging stations installed.

Commercial Vitality

- Commercial occupancy rates, turnover, or net new business licenses to assess growth.
- Sales tax revenue, indicating local restaurant, retail, and service sector activity.

⁹ Examples of metrics identified in this section do not come with any legal obligation for the City to meet certain milestones or goals for development, as this is largely out of the City’s control. Should the City decide to track any metrics, the tracking would be for measuring progress only, and to inform decisionmakers where to focus attention should the outcomes of this plan not be in alignment with reality.

Parks and Environment

- Acres of additional green space or expanded Green Spine / Town Square area.
- Water-quality tests in adjacent wetlands or streams, particularly Ebright and Zackuse Creeks, to measure stormwater management efficacy.
- Total tree canopy within the Town Center, measured over time.

Civic and Cultural Engagement

- Number of events held in the Town Square or other performance venues in Town Center, and/or average attendance for events over time.
- Number of public art installations or number of annual exhibitions.

Adaptive Management and Future Updates

Even the best-laid plans require periodic recalibration to stay effective amid evolving market conditions, regional policy shifts, and technological advancements.

Monitoring and Reporting

- **Bi-Annual Progress Report** - City staff will compile data on key metrics, highlight major developments, and note any emerging issues in implementing the Town Center Plan. This report will be shared with the Planning Commission, City Council, and the public every two years.
- **Mid-Cycle Review** - Every five years, the City will solicit feedback on whether Town Center developments are meeting community expectations for design, affordability, and public amenities.

Adjustments and Amendments

- **Targeted Code Amendments** - If certain incentive programs fail to produce the desired results - like insufficient affordable housing or slow commercial leasing - staff may propose targeted amendments.
- **Infrastructure Phasing Revisions** - Economic factors, grant opportunities, or unforeseen constraints may alter the project pipeline in the City's Capital Improvement Plan. The City will adjust schedules as needed while maintaining transparency and stakeholder input.
- **Major Plan Update** - A comprehensive review of the Town Center Plan typically aligns with the overall Comprehensive Plan's periodic updates (currently on a 10-year cycle). At that juncture, the City may refine sub-district boundaries, update design guidelines, or introduce new ideas for climate resilience and equity.

Looking Ahead: A Town Center That Evolves with Sammamish

Implementation is not a static checklist but an evolving process - one in which the City, community, and private sector collaborate to fine-tune growth, respond to new challenges, and celebrate successes. By phasing development intentionally, providing periodic updates, and adopting an adaptive management mindset, Sammamish can ensure its Town Center becomes a vibrant, inclusive place for generations.

Appendices

1. [2008 STC Plan \(Amended 2020\)](#)
2. [Existing Conditions Report](#)
3. [Code Audit](#)
4. [Real Estate Market Conditions Summary](#)
5. [SEPA & Scoping Discussion](#)