5  LYNNWOOD LINK EXTENSION TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

5.1  Introduction

Consistent with Section 4.3, this report defines transit-oriented development (TOD) as a land development pattern that integrates transit and land use by promoting transit ridership while supporting community land use and development visions. TOD typically consists of public and private development projects that create dense, pedestrian-oriented environments with a mix of land uses and activities at and around transit facilities. The design, configuration and mix of buildings and activities around the transit facility, as well as the location and design of the transit facility, should encourage people to use transit and foster a healthy, livable environment. TOD is generally focused on land within approximately 0.5 miles, or 10- to 15-minute walk, of a transit facility and along corridors that provide key connections to the regional transit system.

There are many benefits to increasing development around a station ranging from potentially reducing dependence on cars (therefore decreasing vehicle miles traveled [VMT] and carbon footprint) to creating compact and walkable communities which are desirable places to live and work, with easy access and connections to regional destinations.

Assessing future development potential related to a transit investment does not conform to a prescribed formula and is generally qualitative in nature. Cervero and Kockelman (Cervero, R and Kockelman, K 1997), two individuals who have studied transportation and land use, first used the term “three D’s” (1997) to describe the features that encourage compact development. Building off these initial “three D’s,” TRB Special Report 298, Driving and the Built Environment (TRB 2009) lists “five D’s: density, diversity, design, destination accessibility, and distance to transit.

The TOD assessment for the Lynnwood Link Extension incorporates these “five D’s” in the four elements used to assess the TOD potential of each station alternative:

- existing conditions supporting TOD
- transit supportive plans and policies
- station access
- potential development opportunities.

The four elements, when considered together, provide an overall assessment of the development potential at each station area. This section includes the methodology and background used to assess each element. Sections 6–12 include the results for each element by station location. Each of the stations was assessed against the elements summarized below
and assigned ratings. The assessment ratings were completed relative to the station alternatives within the Lynnwood Link Extension corridor.

An overall rating is assigned to each station area based on its relative potential to support TOD, assessed by the four elements described below. The ratings for TOD potential include “limited,” “moderate” and “strong.” These ratings are qualitative and may be modified as the project design is refined and/or demographics change, new plans and policies are adopted by jurisdictions, potential market changes, and more detailed TOD analysis is completed.

5.2 Existing Conditions Supporting TOD

Existing conditions – what is on the ground today – are assessed to determine the level of TOD support. This report acknowledges that what is on the ground could change by the time Lynnwood Link Extension is operational in 2023. Assessing existing conditions provides baseline information and can help determine whether and what changes could be made to create a TOD community.

A TOD community is characterized by a mixture of housing and employment within convenient walking distance of transit, a balanced mix of uses, and urban character and design that support and encourage walking. This land use pattern around transit stations is known to increase ridership and, in turn, to help create and sustain the vitality and livability of the surrounding areas.

Existing conditions are assessed within an approximate 0.5-mile radius from station locations which is equivalent to an approximately 10 to 15-minute walk. This area is where populations would benefit the most from improved access to transit and where development to support a transit facility is most likely to occur. Existing population and employment assessment uses a 15-minute walk as described below.

Three elements are rated: population and employment within a 15-minute walk; existing land uses; and existing station area character - based on what is built on the ground today. It is likely that demographic information will change and there may be changes to zoning and the character of the station area prior to implementation of Lynnwood Link Extension.

Population and Employment

Existing station area population and employment are statistics commonly used to assess land uses that support transit as well as to provide data for the number of people that can access transit from home and work. This assessment uses a 15-minute walk shed with a walking speed of 3-miles per hour as the basis for calculating data, as described in Section 5.4 Station Access; maps of the walk sheds and a pedestrian facility inventory are also discussed in that section.

The project corridor includes station areas with the potential to serve both existing and future population and employment. Existing population and employment totals were calculated by proportionately allocating PSRC 2010 Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) -level land use assumptions to
individual parcels (PSRC 2010). All data are rounded to the nearest hundred and conclusions are general. A TAZ typically includes a group of similar census tracts and is used for transportation planning models.

Population and employment data were compared among all Lynnwood Link Extension station areas and rated against each other. The three station areas with the lowest population or employment are assigned a limited rating of “limited,” and the three station areas with the highest population or employment are assigned a rating of “strong.” The remaining four stations are assigned a rating of “moderate.”

**Balanced Mix of Uses**

Often a balanced mix of existing land uses near stations positively contributes to the TOD potential of a station area. The composition of existing land use patterns as a percentage of each designation under current zoning within a 0.5-mile radius of each station was used to assess this balance. Geographic Information System (GIS) data were collected and the local jurisdictions’ zoning designations were grouped into six general categories: single-family residential, multifamily residential, commercial (retail and business uses), institutional/public, mixed use, and parks and open space. Roadway and freeway rights-of-way were included, while water features, primarily minor lakes, were excluded. Vacant parcels were not included. The balanced mix of uses is based on existing zoning designations and may not reflect what is built and on the ground today or changes that may occur in the future. For example, a site may be zoned commercial but the existing use (on the ground today) could be a single-family home or a vacant lot.

Station areas with over 50 percent of one specific zoned use were rated lower than those with a more balanced mix of zoned uses. Positive attributes of a station area that resulted in a higher rating included specific mixed-use designations, multifamily, and commercial uses over 15 percent. Alternatives with a high percentage of land use as rights-of-way were rated lower.

Figure 5-1 illustrates existing land use patterns in the corridor; Figure 5-2 illustrates the composition of uses at each station area.
Figure 5-1. General Existing Land Uses Based on Existing Zoning
Figure 5-2. Land Use Composition by Station Area Based on Existing Zoning
Uses under one percent not illustrated.

Existing Station Area Character

This qualitative element assesses existing factors that can contribute to whether or not a station area is likely to develop into a transit-supportive community, including the character of the surrounding station area today, and the existing uses and existing zoning patterns.

Existing station area character is an important factor in determining if and how a station area might redevelop. The following attributes were considered in this evaluation: minimal building setbacks; commercial and multifamily buildings with well-proportioned facades; strong urban design character including street furniture, trees, and other pedestrian amenities; public amenities and facilities. Other factors such as access to activity centers; barrier-free station access; and existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities contribute to the existing station area character and were considered but are assessed in the Station Access section for each station. Station Access is defined in Section 5.4. Many of the station alternatives in Lynnwood Link Extension are located in areas with few or no commercial uses and therefore could not be assessed on many of the factors listed above.
5.3 Transit-supportive Plans and Policies

A qualitative assessment of plans and policies that support and promote transit-oriented growth in station areas was conducted.

The plans and policies reviewed include comprehensive plans, subarea plans, land use and zoning documents, development codes, design guidelines and other existing transit-related plans and policies. A list of reviewed documents is included in Attachment E.

At a regional level, Lynnwood Link Extension will connect two PSRC designated Regional Growth Centers – Northgate and Lynnwood. Station areas with locally adopted transit-supportive plans and policies rate higher than those station areas with no current plans. Additionally, zoning that supports transit-oriented communities, such as mixed-use designations near stations, rate higher than those station areas with single-use zoning. Jurisdictions that encourage reduced parking requirements near transit stations, zoning incentives to increase density in station areas, or specific requirements to encourage mixed-use development and discourage drive-through or automobile-dependent businesses received a higher rating. Station areas with design guidelines and design goals rate higher than station areas without them.

Because this assessment is based on existing plans, policies, development requirements, and design guidelines, it is possible that jurisdictions may adopt new policy direction prior to implementation of Lynnwood Link Extension.

Adopted Plans and Policies

State and regional plans are discussed in Chapter 2 and apply to all proposed station areas. Existing citywide adopted plans and policies, including comprehensive plans, are summarized in Chapter 3, and station area specific plans and policies are summarized in individual station sections.

Development Requirements

Existing development requirements, also known as municipal codes, were reviewed for each station area and summarized for compatibility with future development potential. Uses permitted outright, allowable building heights and densities, floor-area ratio\(^2\) standards (if any), and parking requirements were compiled for each zoning designation within the 0.5-mile radius from a proposed station location. Codes specifically supporting TOD, such as overlay districts, were included. Requirements are summarized in each station section; Attachment C includes more detailed information listed by jurisdiction.

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\(^2\) Floor-area ratio (FAR) refers to the ratio of the total floor area of a building to the area of the building parcel. The higher the FAR, the greater the density.
Development requirement exceptions, exemptions, conditional uses, and accessory uses were not included in the analysis unless the code deviation is specifically designed to support future density and/or transit use.

**Design Guidelines**

Many jurisdictions now implement design guidelines for certain areas or districts to achieve particular goals and/or objectives within that area. Each station area was assessed to determine (1) if design guidelines exist, and (2) if so, if the design guidelines are supportive of creating a transit-oriented community at the proposed station.

### 5.4 Station Access

Station access looks at how existing development patterns support or hinder passenger travel to and from the station alternatives. Factors assessed include pedestrian access, bicycle access, and transit access. These factors also contribute to the station area character, described in Section 5.2. Vehicle access is not included because it typically does not support a TOD community. Parking data are provided for each station area but not rated.

Overall assessments for station access are based on a combination of the elements described below.

**Pedestrian Access**

Traditionally, 0.5 miles has been the benchmark for maximum walking distance to a mass transit station. Recent research has shown that this distance may be underestimated and pedestrians are willing to walk farther. TCRP Report 153, *Guidelines for Providing Access to Public Transportation Stations* (TCRP 2012), suggests four factors to consider when assessing pedestrian access to a station: Directness and speed of route; Safety and security; Pedestrian-friendly design; and Information. Many factors affect this walking distance to and from transit, including whether they are traveling to and from home or work, and the comfort, safety, and experience of the walk. The latter include pedestrian facilities, adjacent roadway conditions, and the design experience along the pedestrian route as well as topography and weather. Additionally, those station areas with land uses supporting higher densities generally have a higher rate of pedestrian access.

An assessment of existing pedestrian facilities was completed to help understand existing conditions and to identify gaps in the pedestrian system that could affect decisions about how patrons access a station. The inventory includes conditions along arterials within approximately 0.5 miles of a station, existing activity centers, areas of concentrated multifamily housing, and commercial areas.
The level of connectivity between an identified activity center and its nearest station was assessed. Distance, availability of sidewalks, adjacent land uses, and general quality of the walk are factored into the assessment. The identification of existing activity centers was accomplished by using published data on activity centers within the project area. This information was compared with FTA and PSRC guidance and then confirmed in consultation with local jurisdictions. In calculating walk distances, if an activity center is a district or larger shopping area, the distance was measured to the center of the district or a known destination point. Figure 5-3 illustrates the locations of the defined activity centers, and Attachment A details the methodology for identifying the activity centers.

Fifteen-minute walk sheds were mapped and population and employment within these areas were calculated to help determine how far residents and employees could walk from the station to their destination. This data was calculated by proportionately allocating PSRC 2010 TAZ-level land use assumptions to individual parcels. The resulting numbers were then aggregated for the parcels that fall inside the walk shed.

The 15-minute walk is based on a 3-miles per hour (mph) walking speed, or a distance of 0.75 miles from the station location measured along a contiguous walkable path. For this exercise, the pedestrian speed was not adjusted for topography, and no adjustments were made for station circulation or for delays caused by street crossings. The travel distance was measured with GIS mapping along public roadways and walking from the center of a planned station platform to parcel edges. For large parcels, such as golf courses, the distance was measured to the nearest known property entrance. The resulting walk sheds are illustrated in each station section.

**Bicycle Access**

TCRP Report 153 (TCRP 2012) suggests five factors to consider when assessing bicycle access to a station: Safety (perceived and actual); Station characteristics; Network connectivity; Transit agency policy; and Surrounding land use. Although topography and weather conditions can affect bicyclists, TCRP Report 153 notes that high-quality access facilities may offset the negative impacts. Station area characteristics, transit agency policy, and surrounding land use are covered in other sections of this report. Safety is not addressed in this report but will be a contributing factor as the project moves forward. Bicycle network connectivity for each station is included in the assessment of existing bicycle facilities. The inventory includes conditions along arterials within approximately 1.0 miles of a station, existing activity centers within 0.5 miles of a station, areas of concentrated multifamily housing, and commercial areas. An assessment of the connectivity between a station and activity center was not conducted.

Fifteen-minute bicycle sheds were mapped and population and employment within these areas were calculated to help determine how far residents and employees could cycle from the station.
station to their destination. This data was calculated by first proportionately allocating PSRC 2010 TAZ-level land use assumptions to individual parcels (PSRC 2012b). The resulting numbers were then aggregated for the parcels that fall inside the bicycle sheds.

The 15-minute travel shed is based on a bicycling speed of 7 mph, or a distance of 1.75 miles. For this exercise bicycle speeds were not adjusted for topography, and no adjustments were made for station circulation or for delays caused by street crossings. The travel distance was measured with GIS mapping along public roadways and bicycling paths from the center of a planned station platform to parcel edges. For large parcels, such as golf courses, the distance was measured to the nearest known property entrance. The resulting bicycle sheds are illustrated in each station section.

**Transit Access**

Transit access to stations is described for each station area, but not rated, based on existing services and facilities provided by the corridor’s transit operators, which include Sound Transit, King County Metro (KCM) and Community Transit (CT). Existing transit service in the corridor provides connecting services to and from activity centers, within and beyond the corridor, and also serves local trips.

With the construction of light rail, KCM and CT will look at restructuring their services, similar to what King County Metro has done in relation to the existing Link light rail line from downtown Seattle to SeaTac. Also, Sound Transit will eliminate or modify Regional Express service that currently operates between Snohomish County and downtown Seattle to avoid duplication of service.

However, while some of the existing services would be restructured, other routes will remain in place or be only slightly modified to ensure appropriate bus service is provided to each station.

Reported for each station area are the bus routes serving the station area, the connecting places served, the general frequency of the service, and existing park-and-ride facilities in the station area. Although there may be other parking lots within the station area, this report focuses on the park-and-ride facilities designated by the transit agencies. Walk paths and distance between existing bus stops and station platforms are not described, as stops would likely be relocated, if necessary, to increase convenience for riders.

**Parking**

Data describing the existing parking supply and utilization around each station are included to provide a fuller picture of the station areas; however, no ratings are assigned to parking. While the importance of parking design and management in TODs is well understood, the relationship between existing parking patterns and future development potential is far less clear. For example, an abundance of available parking may encourage riders to drive to the station; however, in so doing, more driving could contribute to conditions unfavorable to pedestrians.
and bicyclists. Additionally, land currently devoted to parking may provide some of the most easily exploited development sites for future TOD. Further analysis regarding the impacts of parking on the surrounding neighborhood and TOD potential could be completed at a later date.

Parking supply and utilization is assessed based on a parking inventory performed within a 0.25 mile radius of each station. The inventory counts on- and off-street parking – including only nonresidential spaces in the off-street count – and documents whether the spaces are time-restricted. Utilization is based on midday counts, performed between 9 am and 11 am and 1 pm and 4 pm, for on- and off-street spaces. In some cases, transit agency park-and-ride utilization data were used for park-and-ride spaces. This inventory does not include proposed parking facilities at station alternatives.

5.5 Potential Development Opportunities

The development potential within a station area depends on many factors, as described below. This report focuses on Community TOD opportunities, as defined in Section 4.3 – that is, opportunities within 0.5 miles of a proposed station.

Design of stations, including potential parking facilities, is at a very preliminary stage. Therefore, reviews of site-specific TOD opportunities are at a high level and will be refined as the project design advances. Preliminary market assessments were completed and included in this report but were not incorporated into the assessment rating. Additional in-depth market assessments may be conducted as the project is refined.

Each station area is assessed for its development opportunities potential. The methodology involves the assessment of properties in the station area, a physical inspection of the station area, a review of data from a variety of secondary sources, and analysis of the findings.

The assumptions guiding the assessment are as follows:

1. A station area is defined as the area within a 0.5 mile radius of a proposed station.
2. The station will become operational in approximately 10 years.
3. Until further design and engineering is completed, station footprints, possible parking structures and other ancillary facilities have not been finalized.
4. Similarly, construction staging sites are not included in the analysis since they have not yet been identified and are not likely to be finalized until the project nears construction.
5. The study of ridership generation will be conducted by others.
6. Formal market analysis and development feasibility study will be conducted in the future to confirm the preliminary findings.
7. Except where noted, existing zoning is not considered because it is assumed it will be consistent with potential future zoning.
Figure 5-3. Identified Activity Centers within the North Corridor
Based on the criteria below, qualitative assessments were made to rate each station area on development opportunity potential, on a limited/moderate/strong scale.

- **Improvement Ratio.** The improvement-to-total assessed value ratio provides perspective about the utility of the existing property improvements in the station area and can help determine redevelopment potential. It is calculated by dividing the assessed value of improvements into the sum of the assessed value of the land plus improvements. A typical rule of thumb suggests existing improvements are not demolished to make way for new development unless the values of the improvements represent approximately 25 percent or less of the total assessed value of the property.

- **Supportive Market Conditions.** In the context of the office, multifamily housing, retail, and lodging markets, station areas with strong demographics, low vacancy rates, and rental rates that support the cost of new TOD construction are considered more attractive redevelopment opportunities.

- **Existing Uses.** Station areas with transit-supportive existing uses, such as multifamily housing, multistory office, pedestrian-oriented retail, and mixed use development are more likely to redevelop.

- **Physical Feasibility.** Station area physical characteristics such as topography, physical barriers, and the availability of larger developable parcels influence development potential. For example, steep slopes and barriers, such as freeways, can limit or prohibit development.

- **Ownership.** Station areas with consolidated property ownership are typically less complex to redevelop than assemblages with multiple owners.

### 5.5.1 Preliminary Market Assessments

A preliminary assessment of the market demand for office space, multifamily housing, retail space, and lodging was conducted at station areas. For the purposes of the assessment demand was segmented by time frames: short-term demand (less than 5 years); mid-term demand (5 to 10 years); and long-term demand (10+ years). The scope of each market assessment varied by station depending on location and assessed development opportunities. Station areas were also described in the context of the regional market and the local market in which each is located.

High-level market assessment involves the research and analysis necessary to develop an understanding of the key indicators and trends in the market place. Inferences made from the key indicators can be used to guide further discussion and analysis.

What high-level assessment does not include is the in-depth research and analysis into the fundamental characteristics of supply and demand necessary to solidify the conclusions. This work often includes, but is not limited to, an analysis of public regulations, location ratings, attitudinal surveys, developer/owner surveys, cost estimates, a product mix gap analysis, and market capture estimates.
Since this is a preliminary assessment, a rating for station area market assessments was not determined. A summary of findings is included for each station area.

**Office Market**

The primary intended use of an office building is to house employees of companies that produce a product or service primarily for support services such as administration, accounting, marketing, information processing and dissemination, consulting, human resources management, financial and insurance services, educational and medical services, and other professional services. Office buildings are characterized by work efficient floor plans, work areas, comfortable heating and cooling, cabling for phones and computers, and other conveniences that allow people to conduct business. Office buildings are typically configured for high density use, with a ratio of people to square footage in the 150 to 300 or more range and less than 25 percent of the demised floor space allocated to industrial or retail use.

The attributes of an area can be evaluated to determine its strengths and weaknesses in the market from the perspective of a typical office user. Site selection elements considered in this report included, proximity to complimentary retail, proximity to other office supportive uses, north-south freeway access, access to public transportation, and commute time to employees’ residences.

Some of the preliminary market assessments included in this report differentiate among the three classes of office spaces: Class A space, which are extremely desirable investment grade properties; Class B space, which lack prestige but are generally in good to average condition; and Class C space which are generally no-frills, older buildings that offer basic space. Where applicable, some of the preliminary market assessments also segment the office market into two categories, medical office space and non-medical office space.

Unless stated otherwise, all office rental rates in this report refer to full service, or gross leases in which the rental rate includes all operating expenses such as utilities, electricity, janitorial services, taxes and insurance.

**Retail Market**

A retail property’s primary intended use is to promote, distribute or sell products and services to the general public. It will often be in high traffic or easily accessible areas. Retail buildings are configured for the display of merchandise or the interaction of company sales personnel with others. Retail buildings can be used for various sales opportunities, and can generally be broken into the following four categories:

**General Retail:** typically single tenant freestanding general purpose commercial buildings with parking.
Power Centers: several freestanding (unconnected) anchors and only a minimum amount of small specialty tenants. Power centers typically range in size from 250,000 SF to 600,000 SF.

Shopping Centers: community centers (100,000 – 350,000 SF); neighborhood centers (provides for the sales of convenience typically between 50,000 – 100,000 SF); and strip centers (10,000 – 50,000 SF attached row of stores or service outlets with parking usually located in front of stores).

Malls: lifestyle centers (upscale open center, usually without anchors and about 300,000 SF or larger); regional malls (provides shopping goods, general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and home services and between 300,000 – 750,000 SF); super regional malls (similar to regional malls but 750,000+ SF).

The attributes of an area can be evaluated to determine its strengths and weaknesses in the market from the perspective of a typical retail tenant. Site selection elements considered in this report include, proximity to established retail clusters, north-south freeway access, access to major arterials, access to public transportation, site visibility, daily traffic volumes, and commute time to employees' residences, residential density, and average area household incomes.

Unless stated otherwise, all retail rental rates in this report refer to triple net leases in which the lease rate excludes certain expenses that a tenant could incur in occupying retail space. Such expenses are expected to be paid directly by the tenant and may include janitorial costs, electricity, utilities, taxes, insurance and other related costs.

Apartment Market

Apartment buildings are typically multi-story buildings with units stacked on top of each other and side-by-side units sharing a demising wall. Apartment flats are diverse in size and design, and include studio/efficiency units, and one, two, three, and more, bedroom floor plans. The modern apartment flat can be as large as a single-family home and can include a family room, den, home office, and/or formal dining room.

The attributes of an area can be evaluated to determine its strengths and weaknesses in the market from the perspective of a typical apartment tenant. Apartment site selection elements considered in this report include neighborhood walkability, access to public amenities, quality of school system, proximity to complimentary retail, proximity to employment centers, north-south freeway access, and access to public transportation.
**Lodging Market**

A hotel is an establishment that provides lodging paid on a short-term basis. While hotel properties vary widely in their facilities and services, they typically fall into four broad categories, full service, limited service, select service, and extended stay.

**Full service hotels** are intended to meet all of the requirements of a typical guest, including sleeping, dining, assembly, and recreation. Most of these hotels have at least 200 guestrooms, extensive meeting space, and at least one restaurant. Recreational facilities may include an exercise room, a swimming pool, and/or a health spa.

**Limited service hotels** are typically three or four stories, and designed with interior corridors. These hotels often rely on transient travelers, and thus benefit from arterial exposure. Most range in size from 80 to 150 guestrooms. Typical amenities include a breakfast room, a small amount of meeting space, and a swimming pool.

**Select service hotels** are a hybrid of full service and limited service properties. They are intended to provide the amenities desired by upscale business travelers while eliminating unnecessary facilities and gaining some of the operating efficiencies of a limited service hotel.

**Extended stay hotels** are specifically targeted at long-term guests, defined as those staying at least seven days. For these guests, quieter surroundings generally are preferred over direct arterial exposure. Each guestroom includes a full kitchen.

The attributes of an area can be evaluated to determine its strengths and weaknesses in the market from the perspective of a typical hotel operator. Hotel site selection elements considered in this report include, neighborhood walkability, proximity to complimentary retail, proximity to demand generators such as major universities and employment centers, residential density, access to major arterials, north-south freeway access, and access to public transportation.