

# Tigard Comprehensive Plan

## Special Planning Areas | Chapter 15

# Washington Square Regional Center

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### Overview

The Washington Square Regional Center (WSRC) encompasses approximately 1,000 acres of commercial and residential land that is located on the northern edge of Tigard, the southeastern edge of Beaverton, and the eastern edge of unincorporated Washington County. While centered on the Washington Square Mall, it extends nearly a mile in all directions from the mall itself. Designated a regional center in 1995, it is one of eight regional centers identified in the Metro 2040 Growth Concept. Regional centers are intended to contain compact and urban-scale development adjacent to major transportation corridors with high-quality transit service and multimodal transportation facilities.

Washington Square was designated a regional center because of its concentration of jobs and stores that are accessible from around the region via Highway 217, Hall Boulevard, Scholls Ferry Road, and multiple transit lines. However, the area does not yet contain all the desired elements of a regional center. The development pattern is predominantly suburban in scale and character, and multimodal transportation facilities are nonexistent or substandard.

The first plan for the WSRC was developed in 1999. It envisioned the area as a dense and walkable commercial hub with lots of housing, urban amenities, and mixed-use development served by commuter rail, multiple bus lines, and a local shuttle. These aspirations are reflected in various chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. It has long been the City's goal to direct a significant portion of Tigard's future employment growth and high-density housing to this area.

This goal still guides long-term planning for the WSRC. However, many things have changed since the development of the original plan. Online shopping has disrupted the retail sector, and technological innovations are changing the way people travel and work. Equity has become a higher priority for the City, and housing and climate issues have become more severe.

In 2020-2021, the City engaged the community in a long-range planning project to update the original plan. The main goal of this update project was to refine the original vision and update existing policies to better align them with current community needs and aspirations, emerging market trends, and Tigard's goal to be a walkable, healthy, and inclusive community per the City's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The project team made a special effort to engage community members who reflected the diversity of the WSRC community, particularly those from historically marginalized populations. Hundreds of community members participated in the project and helped shape project outcomes.

The findings, goals, policies, and action measures in this *Special Planning Areas* section are from the 2020-2021 update project. The focus of this section is the portion of the regional center within Tigard’s Urban Planning Area, which includes land within Tigard and unincorporated Washington County. For the purposes of this chapter, this subset of the regional center is referred to as the Tigard WSRC.

## Key Findings

- **Development of the regional center into a dense, walkable, and vibrant place has been challenging.** The regional center is located within three jurisdictions and served by even more service providers. The various jurisdictions and service providers have not always shared the same priorities over time. More than a dozen zones regulate development in the area, and there is no dedicated funding source to build needed public improvements. The market and physical conditions that would support more intense and compact development on a broad scale do not yet exist.
- **The majority of land in the regional center is devoted to commercial activity in single-use buildings with large surface parking areas.** There is very little vacant land. Existing zoning allows for more intense mixed-use development, but the area remains largely underdeveloped and auto-oriented. Lincoln Center is the exception. It is a compact, multi-story development that provides employment for almost 1,000 employees in over a hundred businesses, but the rest of the area lacks this level of development intensity and diversity. Very little new commercial development has occurred in the last several decades. However, the Washington Square Mall is poised to redevelop portions of its site with taller, mixed-use buildings, potentially signaling additional changes to come.
- **The regional center population is more diverse than the City as a whole and has above average indicators of potential disadvantage.** The regional center is home to roughly 2,000 people. Compared to the city overall, the regional center is home to more renters and households with low and moderate incomes.
- **Renters in and adjacent to the regional center may be at risk for displacement.** Those who live in older, unsubsidized housing; face more discrimination in the housing market; or pay more than 30% of their income for rent (i.e., cost-burdened households) are at particular risk. The conditions that could cause displacement are already present in the area. There is a large renter population (roughly half of whom are cost-burdened) and a number of older, unsubsidized apartment buildings, particularly along Hall Blvd. Moreover, future public or private investment has the potential to make the area more desirable, which can lead to higher rents, redevelopment, or major renovations, particularly if new housing is not built to absorb the increased demand. Large-scale displacement is likely not imminent, but displacement is hard to address after the fact and requires early intervention.
- **The number of employees and businesses in the regional center has declined by about 12 percent since 2003.** Salaries across all industries in this area have declined as well. The lowest-paid employees made up roughly one-third of the 2018 workforce—totaling over 5,000 employees—and earned 33 percent less than their 2003 counterparts.

- **The retail landscape is changing.** The large concentration of existing retail businesses at a highway interchange makes the area relatively attractive for retail businesses serving southeastern Washington County. However, recent retail trends suggest dramatic shifts occurring in the suburbs, especially around suburban shopping centers and malls. Demand for urban-style living and experiential and entertainment retail has increased over the past several years, coupled with the closure of big box stores.
- **Employment areas are in transition.** Existing business parks have lower rents compared to other nearby employment areas. Vacancy rates are high, and some tenant spaces have begun to transition to other uses—such as specialty retail and light manufacturing—indicating reduced demand from traditional office users. These business parks have limited opportunities for redevelopment but offer potential for property owners to improve and modernize their properties to attract tenants who would otherwise look elsewhere in the region.
- **There is strong potential for residential infill development.** Recent and pending construction activity in the area shows fairly strong demand for residential development such as apartments, rowhouses, and detached houses, all of which are consistent with the vision for the area.
- **City regulations are an impediment to desired development.** While existing zoning allows for a variety of development types and scales, development regulations make high-density development prohibitively expensive (because of minimum parking and landscaping requirements) and largely preclude low- and medium-density development (because of minimum density and height requirements).
- **There is good vehicle access to the regional center.** However, travel within the area is difficult for all modes of travel—but especially for people walking and biking—due to barriers created by existing development, major roads, train tracks, and Fanno Creek.
- **Pedestrian and bike facilities are disconnected or non-existent.** All major roads in the regional center have discontinuous pedestrian and bike facilities that are not appropriately sized or buffered for the road conditions. Existing crossings of major roads, including Highway 217, are few and far between, making it difficult for people on foot or bike to access parks, trails, transit, services, and schools. Fanno Creek Trail provides a continuous north-south route for people on foot or bike, but it is difficult to reach without a vehicle.
- **Transit service is present but poorly integrated.** The area is served by multiple bus lines and the WES commuter rail. However, the WES station and the Washington Square Transit Center are separated by Highway 217, and neither offers many amenities for riders. A park and ride lot located between the two is difficult to access by foot or bike from either direction. Additionally, the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project is being planned for elsewhere, making the area one of only two regional centers not served by light rail.

**GOAL 15.1:** Develop a coordinated land use and transportation framework that supports development of the Tigard WSRC into a dense, walkable, and vibrant place and that also reflects market realities, community needs and aspirations, and City goals related to sustainable growth.

#### POLICIES

1. Promote the efficient use of land through regulations, incentives, and partnerships.
2. Allow a complementary mix of land uses that are appropriate in a walkable urban environment.
3. Prioritize high-intensity, transit-supportive development on both sides of Greenburg Rd and along Oak Street. Limit new low-intensity development in these areas to preserve opportunities for higher intensity development over the long-term.
4. Allow incremental increases in development intensity outside of areas prioritized for high-intensity, transit-supportive development.
5. Regulate the design and location of streets, buildings, parking areas, and other site improvements to support the development of a walkable urban environment.
6. Utilize a variety of strategies over time to minimize and mitigate the impacts of increased on-street parking and traffic that potentially may occur with higher intensity development.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES

- i. Update land use regulations for the Tigard WSRC as follows:
  - a. Zone the areas on both sides of Greenburg Rd, including the Washington Square Mall, for horizontal and vertical mixed-use development in buildings up to 12 stories tall that support a wide range of stores, services, and housing options.
  - b. Zone the areas west of Highway 217 for a mix of commercial and light industrial uses in buildings up to 7 stories tall, with an option for housing on upper stories.
  - c. Zone the areas west of and along Hall Blvd for a variety of housing types and densities in buildings between 1 and 3 stories tall in most places and up to 7 stories tall along Oak Street, with an option for ground floor commercial uses in some locations.
  - d. Zone the existing commercial node along Hall Blvd, roughly between Locust Street and Oak Street, for small-scale neighborhood-serving businesses in buildings up to 2 stories tall, with an option for additional stories if housing is provided on upper stories.
- ii. Update street, site, and building design regulations consistent with these goals and policies.
- iii. Allow a range of building heights by-right and with discretionary approval as a strategy for achieving higher intensity development in targeted areas.
- iv. Incentivize vertical mixed-use development in targeted areas through measures such as height bonuses or the creation of a Vertical Housing Development Zone.
- v. Work with property owners, businesses, residents, and neighborhood or homeowner associations to develop traffic calming or parking management plans as needed.
- vi. Apply City land use designations and zoning classifications to properties in unincorporated Washington County only upon annexation to the City of Tigard.

**GOAL 15.2:** Implement and advocate for an equitable and inclusive approach to public investment in the Tigard WSRC in which the benefits of development are broadly shared by all.

#### POLICIES

1. Support the development and preservation of regulated affordable housing.
2. Work to prevent displacement of socially vulnerable households in anti-displacement priority areas.
3. Seek opportunities to expand the amount of green space for active or passive recreation in areas with a large number of market affordable or regulated affordable housing units.
4. Prioritize and advocate for active transportation improvements that improve access to nature, recreation, schools, transit, jobs, and services in areas with a large number of market affordable or regulated affordable housing units.
5. Work to increase business diversity, especially the number of minority- and women-owned businesses in the area.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES

- i. Partner with culturally diverse community organizations to reach socially vulnerable households, understand their needs and priorities, and involve them in the public investment planning process.
- ii. Look at ongoing funding solutions, such as setting aside development fees, to support development of affordable housing, prevent residential displacement, improve the active transportation network, and expand green space for recreation.
- iii. Implement the Tigard Affordable Housing Plan, especially those policies and programs that support rental housing stability and affordable housing development.
- iv. Offer height bonuses and some City fee exemptions for developments with affordable housing units.
- v. Partner with non-profit and multicultural business partners to support women- and minority-owned businesses.

**GOAL 15.3:** Prioritize improvements to the active transportation network in the Tigard WSRC to improve safety, access, and comfort for people of all ages and abilities and to advance the City’s climate resiliency and equity goals.

#### POLICIES

1. Include Tigard WSRC active transportation needs and recommendations in the Tigard Transportation System Plan.
2. Require development to improve the transportation network for all modes of travel in proportion to its impact on the network.
3. Develop one or more safe and comfortable active transportation routes across Highway 217 and along and across Greenburg Rd for people traveling to Fanno Creek Trail, Tigard Heritage Trail, Metzger Elementary School, or Fowler Middle School in coordination with ODOT and Washington County.
4. Advocate for TriMet to provide high-quality transit facilities and services to, from, and within the area that will provide a competitive travel option for workers and residents, resulting in less vehicle miles traveled per capita and related greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Advocate for the applicable road authorities to expand and enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities, especially on major roads and transit streets.
6. Seek opportunities to connect the area to regional and local trails in Washington County, Beaverton, and Portland.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES

- i. Evaluate alternative pedestrian and bicycle routes from the area north of Highway 217 to the Tigard Heritage Trail northern terminus and the Fanno Creek Trail access on North Dakota Street, including a new Highway 217 overcrossing at 95<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- ii. Develop street cross sections for Greenburg Rd and Oak Street that reflect their role in the active transportation network, are consistent with their functional classifications, and respond to right-of-way constraints created by existing development.
- iii. Pursue jurisdictional transfer of Greenburg Rd from Washington County to Tigard.
- iv. Pursue Washington County MSTIP funding for Greenburg Rd to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, access, and comfort between North Dakota Street and Hall Blvd.
- v. Complete pedestrian and bicycle facilities on Oak Street, including a grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle path and intersection improvements at Greenburg Rd, Hall Blvd, and 87<sup>th</sup> Ave. Reclassify the segment between Greenburg Rd and 90<sup>th</sup> Ave as a Collector Street.
- vi. Extend Lincoln Street south to Oak Street and reclassify as a Local Street.
- vii. Advocate for Washington County to complete pedestrian and bicycle facilities on 90<sup>th</sup> Ave, reclassify as a Neighborhood Route, and evaluate for Neighborhood Greenway treatments.
- viii. Advocate for Washington County to evaluate the feasibility of a pedestrian connection between Borders Street and Hall Blvd.
- ix. Advocate for ODOT to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, access, and comfort along Hall Blvd and Scholls Ferry Rd through measures such as protected bike lanes, sidewalk infill, and enhanced crossings.
- x. Discuss jurisdictional transfer and right-of-way annexation with ODOT for the portion of Hall Blvd within the Tigard WSRC after the jurisdictional transfer discussions for the southern portion of Hall Blvd have concluded.

- xi. Advocate for TriMet and Washington Square Mall to evaluate and modify transit facilities and services as needed in the future to better serve Washington Square Mall as it redevelops, including an evaluation of the need for and location of the Progress Ridge Park & Ride.
- xii. Evaluate and pursue opportunities to connect the area to regional and local trails outside the City during the City's next update of its Trails and Greenways Plan.

**GOAL 15.4: Provide recreational opportunities and access to nature for all, especially for households in the Tigard WSRC with little or no private open space.**

**POLICIES**

1. Work to ensure that sufficient publicly-accessible open space is built, such as parks and plazas, to adequately serve existing and future residents, workers, and visitors through the use of acquisitions, incentives, regulations, and partnerships.
2. Improve multimodal access to existing and planned parks and trails.
3. Seek opportunities to expand the amount of green space for active or passive recreation, especially in areas planned for higher intensity development.
4. Seek opportunities to partner with private property owners, public agencies, and public service providers to advance these policies.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES**

- i. Develop a Tigard WSRC Open Space Plan that identifies open space needs, potential land acquisitions or public-private partnerships, funding sources, and priority projects.
- ii. Work to overcome the transportation barriers for people on foot or bike north of Highway 217 traveling to Fanno Creek Trail, Tigard Heritage Trail, and Bagan Park.
- iii. Work to formalize the Washington Square Loop and Metzger-Fowler Loop including, but not limited to, interjurisdictional coordination, community engagement, wayfinding signage, and street improvements.
- iv. Approach private property owners west and north of the planned park on Steve Street to explore interest in and the feasibility of providing public access to the park from Hall Blvd or Spruce Street.
- v. Partner with Washington County to advocate for ODOT to provide a safe crossing of Hall Blvd at or near Hemlock Street to improve access to Metzger Park across Hall Blvd.
- vi. Require higher intensity development to provide public open space or amenities upon redevelopment through regulatory incentives, proportional exactions, or System Development Charge credits.
- vii. Engage private property owners and Clean Water Services in the City-led Washington Square Stormwater Retrofit Project to study the feasibility of retroactively adding aboveground stormwater facilities that also provide public open space or recreation opportunities.
- viii. Partner with Tigard-Tualatin School District to improve Metzger School Park.
- ix. Partner with CPO-4M or other community-based organization to explore interest in Ash Creek wetland restoration, including limited public access, with private property owners.

**GOAL 15.5: Facilitate the development of a variety of housing types and densities in the Tigard WSRC to meet the needs of households of all incomes and sizes.**

**POLICIES**

1. Allow housing everywhere in the Tigard WSRC.
2. Support the development of a variety of housing types and densities in single-use and mixed-use buildings.
3. Support the development of needed housing, including middle housing.
4. Encourage housing above ground-floor commercial uses.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES**

- i. Remove regulatory barriers for medium- and high-density housing development.
- ii. Implement the Tigard Affordable Housing Plan, especially those policies and programs that support middle housing development.
- iii. Offer height bonuses for residential mixed-use developments in Hall Blvd “Main Street” area.

**GOAL 15.6: Support regional-serving businesses in the Tigard WSRC while working to grow traded-sector and local-serving businesses in order to advance economic mobility for all.**

**POLICIES**

1. Foster economic and business growth by providing incentives and removing regulatory barriers where consistent with these goals and policies.
2. Support and encourage major redevelopment of the Washington Square Mall where consistent with these goals and policies.
3. Utilize a variety of strategies to support Hall Blvd businesses.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES**

- i. Remove regulatory barriers in targeted areas including, but not limited to, minimum requirements for parking, building height, residential density, and floor area ratio.
- ii. Offer height bonuses for commercial mixed-use development in medium-density residential areas.
- iii. Explore the feasibility of a community commercial investment pilot project along Hall Blvd.
- iv. Explore interest in an Oregon “Main Street” designation for Hall Blvd.
- v. Explore interest in a business incubation program to grow the local labor and supply chain.
- vi. Develop a variety of resources and materials in multiple languages for small businesses, such as a list of small business advisors.

**GOAL 15.7: Collaborate and coordinate with applicable agencies, service providers, and community partners to implement the Tigard WSRC land use and transportation framework.**

**POLICIES**

1. Advocate for financial and political support at the state and regional levels to realize the land use and transportation vision for the Tigard WSRC in recognition of the critical role it plays within the region and beyond for managing growth and creating climate-resilient and equitable communities.
2. Coordinate with Metro to ensure that the Tigard WSRC goals and policies are consistent with the Metro Regional Framework Plan and Metro 2040 Growth Concept.
3. Collaborate with applicable agencies and service providers to ensure that needed transportation, transit, and utility infrastructure improvements are identified and prioritized for strategic public and private investment.
4. Maintain existing relationships and cultivate new relationships with community partners to advance these goals and policies.
5. Seek funding from a variety of sources to advance these goals and policies.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES**

- i. Participate in the Oregon Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities Rulemaking efforts and amend policies and regulations as appropriate for local compliance.
- ii. Work with ODOT to evaluate the feasibility of improving the existing Greenburg Rd bridge over Highway 217 and installing a new pedestrian bridge at 95th Ave over Highway 217.
- iii. Advocate for ODOT to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Hall Blvd.
- iv. Discuss jurisdictional transfer and right-of-way annexation with ODOT for the portion of Hall Blvd within the Tigard WSRC after the jurisdictional transfer discussions for the southern portion of Hall Blvd have concluded.
- v. Advocate for Washington County to prioritize MSTIP funding for Greenburg Rd improvements.
- vi. Work with Washington County to transfer jurisdiction of Greenburg Rd from the County to the City.
- vii. Partner with Clean Water Services to complete the City-led Washington Square Stormwater Retrofit Project.