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LAND USE

III. LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element is designed to help Fircrest achieve its vision for a city that has gracefully accommodated growth and change, while ensuring that the community's high-quality of life and cherished are retained. The Land Use Element provides the basis for planning for anticipated growth, including needs for transportation, parks and open space, and other public facilities and services to serve future growth. The pattern of uses that make up Fircrest helps support the community's long-term vision and goals by describing locations where development is appropriate. Additional information, including the land use inventory, can be found in Appendix A.

STATE PLANNING CONTEXT

Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Washington State Growth Management Act identifies that for cities such as Fircrest that are required to plan under RCW 36.70A.070, a comprehensive plan must include a map or maps, and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan. The plan shall be an internally consistent document and all elements shall be consistent with the future land use map. Each comprehensive plan shall include:

"A land use element designating the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land, where appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces, public utilities, public facilities, and other land uses. The land use element shall include population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth. The land use element shall provide for protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies. Where applicable, the land use element shall review drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff in the area and nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state, including Puget Sound or waters entering Puget Sound."

REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Vision 2050 Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs)

Under the Growth Management Act, multicounty planning policies provide a common region-wide framework for countywide and local planning in the central Puget Sound region, particularly in transportation planning and its relationship to land use. The unified structure established by the MPPs has both practical and substantive effects on the development and implementation of comprehensive plans, including land use elements.

The MPPs provide guidance for implementing Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy. This strategy is a preferred pattern for accommodating a significant share of the region's residential and employment growth within a number of regional centers. It is designed to minimize environmental impacts, support economic prosperity, improve mobility, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure. The strategy promotes infill and redevelopment within urban areas to create more compact, walkable, and transit-friendly communities.

Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)

The Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies is a written policy statement that establishes a countywide framework from which county and municipal comprehensive plans are developed and adopted. The framework is intended to ensure that municipal and county comprehensive plans are consistent.

The CPPs are intended to provide guiding goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for the subsequent adoption of comprehensive plans. CPPs that offer guidance for development of the Land Use Element include ones that address Buildable Lands, Community and Urban Design, Economic Development and Employment, Health, Healthy Communities, and Healthy Community Planning, and Urban Growth Areas.

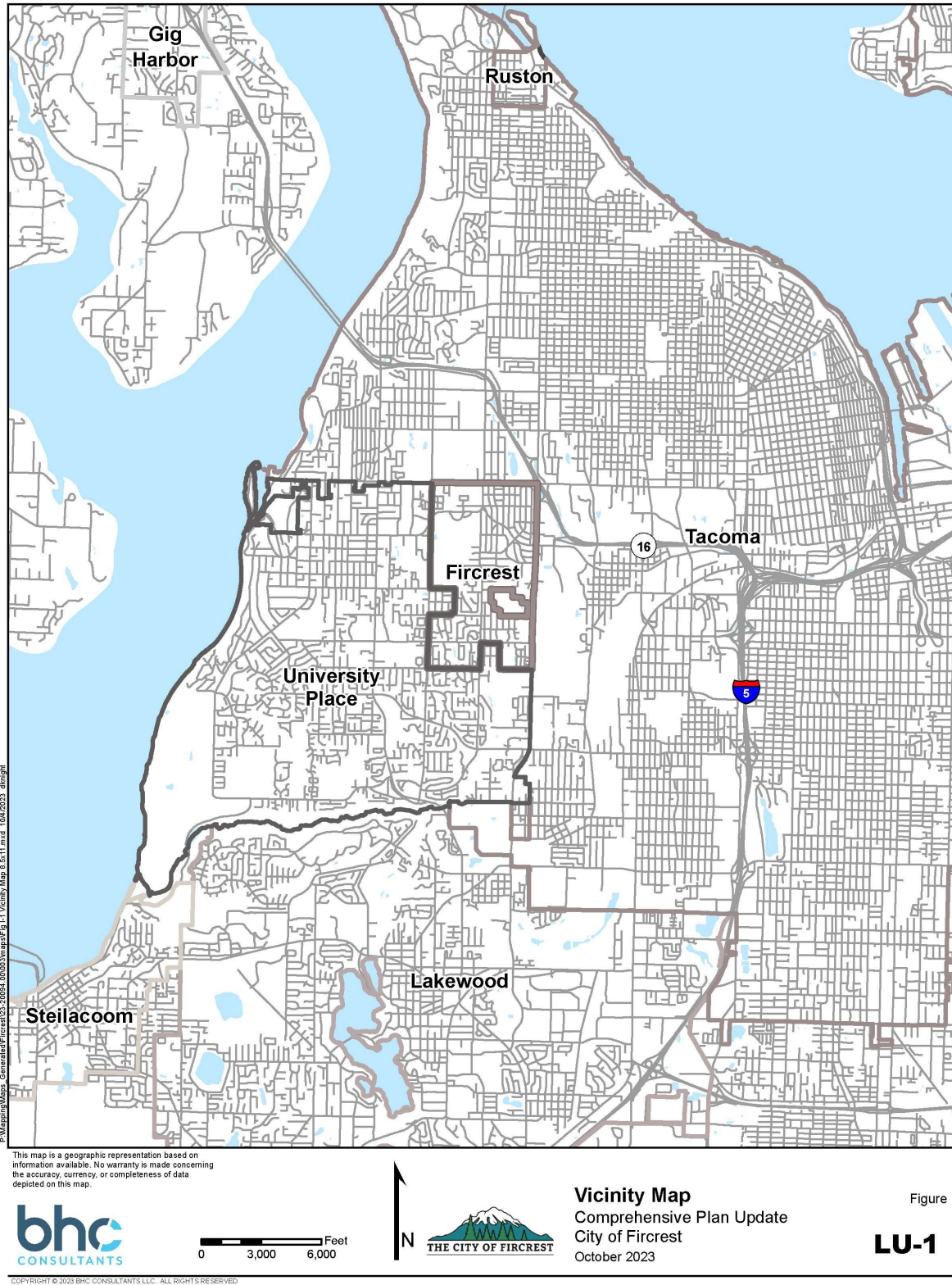
LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

As identified through the plan's outreach and visioning, community members value the existing low-scale residential uses, their Community Center and parks, tree canopy, and have indicated desire for more places to gather, whether it be a public amenity or use or private retail opportunities. Simultaneously, community safety, particularly when it comes to road safety and traffic, were a large concern.

The goals and policies must also consider the fact that Fircrest operates within a wider region. With high regional growth and demand for housing, the planned light rail coming to Tacoma Community College (TCC), the development of the 19th and Mildred/Four Corners Regional Center and the resulting increase in land values, the Land Use Element's goals and policies must balance the desired community design characteristics while ensuring that Fircrest remains attainable and accessible for its existing residents and future families who choose to move to the City.

The goals and policies established in this Element intend to find a balance between ensuring land uses provide for and maintain the types of uses that community members value, provide land use design that encourages community safety, housing choices for all, and recognizes the need for growth management and the addressing any potential displacement pressures through land use policies.

Figure LU-1 Vicinity Map



GOALS AND POLICIES

This Element contains the land use goals and policies for the City of Fircrest. The following goals establish broad direction for land use, while the policies provide more detail about the outline steps needed to meet the intent of each goal. Goals may be preceded by an initial statement that provides an intent or purpose for the goal.

Growth Management

The following goals are consistent with Washington's Growth Management Act, Vision 2050, Pierce County CPPs, and Fircrest's Vision. These goals include encouraging efficient development in urban areas to retain open space, providing a variety of housing types and sustainable economic growth, focusing population and employment growth in cities, ensuring that public facilities and services are adequate, and investing in transportation to support planned land use and to provide travel choices.

Goal LU-1: Provide sufficient land area and densities to meet Fircrest's projected needs for housing, employment and public facilities while focusing growth in appropriate locations.

Policy LU-1.1

Ensure that development regulations, including form-based codes and density, land use, and site development standards, provide for achievement of Fircrest's preferred land use pattern and urban form.

Policy LU-1.2

Manage growth so that delivery of public facilities and services will occur in a fiscally responsible manner to support development and redevelopment. Allow new development only where adequate public facilities and services can be provided.

Policy LU-1.3

Encourage development of both public and private lands in Fircrest that provides long-term benefit to the community using techniques such as green building and green infrastructure. Incentivize green building techniques and certification for new development where possible and encourage retrofits to existing buildings to improve energy efficiency.

Policy LU-1.4

Provide an appropriate level of flexibility through development regulations to promote efficient use of buildable land. Balance this flexibility with other community goals and the need for predictability in decision making. Achieve this through implementation of form-based codes, through measures such as clustering that preserve open space, and by considering administrative variances for minor variations.

Policy LU-1.5

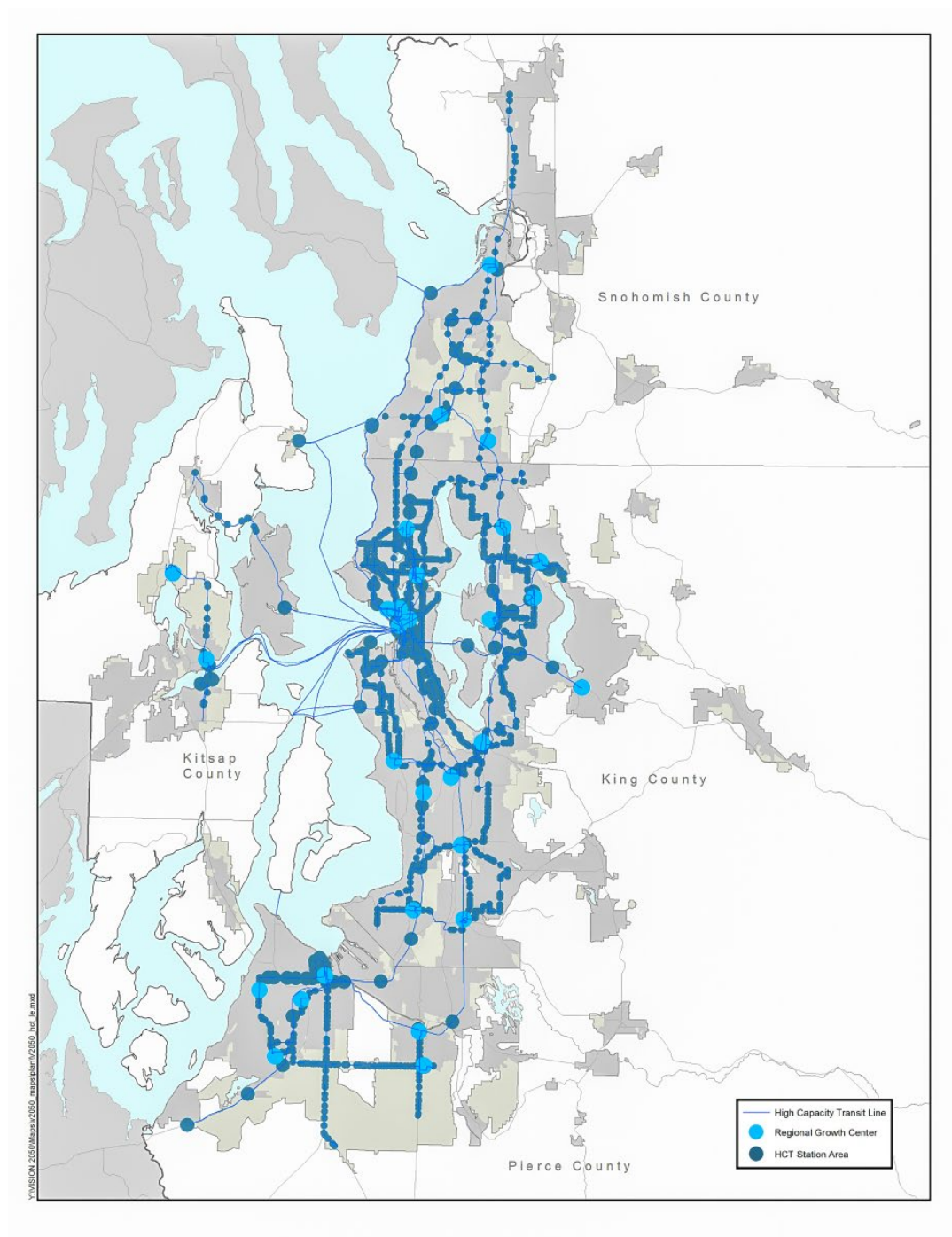
Encourage infill development on suitable vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized parcels. Ensure that the height, bulk, and design of infill and redevelopment projects are supportive of the public realm and compatible with their surroundings.

Policy LU-1.6

Support opportunities for shops, services, recreation, and access to healthy food sources within walking or bicycling distance of homes, workplaces, and other gathering places, while prioritizing historically underserved communities.

Policy LU-1.7

Encourage land uses and designs that encourage modes of travel other than driving alone, such as walking, bicycling and transit, and provide connections to the nonmotorized system.



Land Use Compatibility

Retaining and enhancing Fircrest's high-quality of life is important to the Fircrest community. Many uses can enhance the community's scale and assets if designed and developed well. However, some activities such as noise or fumes may create impacts which adversely affect other uses. Fircrest's overall policy is to minimize adverse impacts on sensitive, lower intensity uses, such as residential uses, while fostering uses that contribute to community members' health and well-being.

Goal LU-2: Guide future growth and development to protect and enhance the City's quality of life, scale, and compatibility with existing community fabric.

Policy LU-2.1

Refine and maintain development regulations that promote compatibility between uses, retain and enhance desired neighborhood scale and a human scale public realm, ensure adequate light, air and open space.

NEW LU-2.2

Encourage land uses that protect and improve overall environmental quality and mitigate potential impacts on public facilities and services. For example, such uses may include those that reduce impervious surface areas, building intensities, and include high-quality landscaping and active transportation options.

Policy LU-2.2

Through development regulations, promote high-quality residential designs that complement Fircrest's existing residential scale while also promoting residential uses that meet differing household needs and incomes. Examples may include:

- Providing variety in building and site design and visually appealing streetscapes in residential developments of several dwellings or more.
- Minimizing significant impacts, such as loss of light or privacy, from large residential infill buildings on adjacent residents.
- Promoting compatibility with Fircrest's residential neighborhoods and avoid an appearance of overcrowding when rezones will increase residential development capacity or when density bonuses or flexibility in site standards are utilized.
- Emphasizing features existing single-detached dwellings, such as pitched roofs, single points of entry and substantial window trim, as part of missing middle housing.

Policy LU-2.3

Promote compatibility between land uses by minimizing uses with adverse impacts, including as noise, vibration, smoke, and by providing effective transitions between land uses. This can be achieved through gradually stepping up building heights, screening, and increased landscaping buffers.

Community Facilities and Services

A well-functioning community depends on the availability of and equitable access to a variety of community facilities and services. Schools, libraries, and facilities for enjoying recreation and art are essential to the social and cultural vibrancy of the community. The health of the community depends on the availability of safe drinking water, adequate wastewater collection, sustainable stormwater management, a coordinated public safety system, access to healthy food, and opportunities for active living.

Goal LU-3: Provide community facilities and services commensurate with the needs of the community.

Policy LU-3.1

Provide needed facilities that serve the public such as facilities for education, libraries, parks, culture and recreation, police and fire, transportation, and utilities.

NEW Policy LU-3.2

Ensure that these facilities are located in a manner that is compatible with the Future Land Use Map. When facilities are not provided within the community, provide alternative means of support for their services.

NEW LU-3.3

Prioritize providing access to a public library, through either partnership with the City of Tacoma or Pierce County library system, or by identifying opportunities to establish a local Fircrest library.

Policy LU-3.4

Incorporate consideration of physical health and well-being into local decisions through locating, designing, and operating public facilities. Examples of this include facilities that:

- Use building and development practices that provide long-term benefit to the community.
- Encourage walking and bicycling access to public facilities.
- Support creation of community gardens on public open space in accessible locations throughout Fircrest.
- Provide tools such as educational and demonstration programs that help foster a healthy environment, physical activity and well-being, and public safety.

Future Land Use Designations

The Future Land Use Map (Figure LU-2) establishes the City's preferred land use pattern by designating Land Use Designations. These designations provide a framework for guiding development consistent with the City's vision, goals, objectives, and policies. The purpose and intent of each designation, and the general types of uses allowed in each designation, are provided in the section of the Land Use Element following the goals and policies.

Goal LU-4: Ensure that decisions on land use designations and zoning are consistent with the City's vision, goals, objectives, and policies as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan and consider GMA goals

regarding urban growth, sprawl, property rights, permits, economic development, and open space and recreation.

Policy LU-4.1

Consider the following when making decisions on land use designations and zoning:

- Whether development will be directed away from environmentally sensitive areas and other important natural resources and in a way that minimizes impacts on natural resources.
- The adequacy of the existing and planned transportation system and other public facilities and services.
- Projected need and demand for housing types and commercial space.
- The balance between the amount and type of employment in Fircrest and the amount and type of housing in Fircrest.
- Suitability of an area for the proposed designation or zone.
- Opportunities to separate potentially incompatible uses by topography, buffers, zoning transitions or other techniques.
- The regional effects of the growth on Fircrest's adjacent neighbors within Pierce County.

Policy LU-4.2

Apply zone classifications and overlays consistent with the Plan Map land use designations, as shown in Table LU-1.

Table LU-1 Future Land Use Designations

Plan Map Land Use Designation	Consistent Zone Classifications and Overlays
Low Density Residential	Residential-4 Residential-6
Low Density Residential - Conservation	Residential-4-C
Medium Density Residential	Residential-8
Medium Density Residential - Traditional Community Design	Residential-10-TCD
High Density Residential	Residential-20; Residential-30
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	Park, Recreation and Open Space Golf Course
Neighborhood Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial Neighborhood Office
Mixed-Use	Mixed-Use Neighborhood Mixed-Use Urban
Public and Quasi Public Facilities	All districts

Residential Land Use

Fircrest community members treasure their neighborhoods and the characteristics that make each one unique and special. Many community members value safety, quiet, friendliness, attractiveness, and a feeling of connection to their neighborhood and to the community. The following goals and policies provide general guidance for development in residential areas, including density, allowed uses, and development standards.

Goal LU-5: Achieve a mix of housing types and densities, maintain attractive and healthy residential neighborhoods, and guide new housing development into appropriate areas.

Policy LU-5.1

Accommodate and encourage a wide range of housing types to meet the needs of community members through various life stages.

Policy LU-5.2

Expand housing choices, such as missing middle housing, to enable residents to remain living in the community as their housing needs or preferences change over time, and to attract new residents to the community.

Policy LU-5.3

Encourage detached and attached single-family dwellings, cottage housing, live-work units, multi-family dwellings, including townhomes and units located within vertical mixed-use buildings, accessory dwelling units, residential care facilities for those who are unable to maintain independent living arrangements, and other innovative housing that is compatible with the type and scale of surrounding residential development.

Policy LU-5.4

Allow manufactured homes in low density residential areas, subject to applicable federal and state siting requirements and local health and safety regulations.

Policy LU-5.5

Provide for a range of residential densities based on existing development patterns, community needs and values, proximity to facilities and services, immediate surrounding densities, and protection of natural environmental features.

Policy LU-5.6

Encourage innovation in site and building design in and adjacent to critical areas in accordance with Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. For example, clustering of units outside of critical areas and associated buffers may be permitted provided that overall density of a site does not exceed the maximum allowable dwelling units per acre. Appropriate buffering, design features, and amenities must be included in all innovative designs.

NEW Policy LU-5.7

Enhance and complement the existing human scale of residential neighborhoods.

Revised for CPP TR-12.1 Policy LU-5.8

Support the development of transit and multimodal hubs by implementing the Form-Based Code and mixed-use uses to achieve increased residential density near arterials and transit

hubs, for example the Form-Based Code area, to accommodate expected population and employment growth.

Policy LU-5.9

Ensure residential infill development is compatible with surrounding development in terms of scale, form, relationship to the street, and other design elements. Buffers, landscaping, and building design and placement should blend with the neighboring community to enhance the transition between different densities and land uses. Multi-family design standards and guidelines should be implemented to support this objective.

Policy LU-5.10

Encourage home occupations that are compatible with the surrounding residential area to expand local economic opportunities for Fircrest's residents.



Commercial Land Use

Commercial areas provide for the development and operation of retail and service businesses in support of community needs. Well-designed and -located commercial developments enable people to walk to a nearby restaurant or to park once and shop at several businesses. Good design and location are also important to providing transit service, avoiding conflicts with nearby uses, reducing traffic problems, and providing for easy delivery and pickup of goods. Encouraging small-scale commercial areas near residential areas can reduce the distance people have to travel for frequently purchased goods and services.

Goal LU-6: Achieve a mix of commercial land uses that serve the needs of the City's residents, businesses and visitors while protecting and enhancing the uniqueness of Fircrest's residential neighborhoods.

Policy LU-6.1

Design new and redeveloped commercial and mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods to achieve community goals for attractive streets, public spaces, and pedestrian amenities.

Policy LU-6.2

Encourage the development of new businesses and expansion of existing businesses to help meet the retail and service needs of Fircrest's residents. Recruit new businesses to the City to expand and diversify the City's employment base.

Policy LU-6.3

Encourage environmentally clean, non-polluting businesses through the implementation of performance standards that mitigate potential environmental and health impacts. Commercial uses that have minimal impact on adjacent areas shall be preferred over higher impact uses when located immediately adjacent to residential land uses.

Policy LU-6.4

Discourage the expansion of linear commercial "strips", and support pedestrian-oriented development instead. Buildings and off-street parking should be sited to enhance the public realm and streetscape, achieving pedestrian-orientated site design. Parking should be located to the rear or side of buildings. Buildings should have an obvious pedestrian entrance, pedestrian-level windows, weather protection, and architectural details and pedestrian-scale signage on the street.

Policy LU-6.5

Where possible, prevent automobile-oriented businesses such as restaurants with drive-up windows in neighborhood commercial areas. Reduce the negative impacts of businesses providing delivery services in these areas through development regulations.

Policy LU-6.6

Enable existing automobile-oriented businesses, such as restaurants with drive-up windows, to continue to operate or be modified in mixed-use areas subject to compliance with design standards and guidelines intended to minimize impacts on neighboring properties. Site design for such businesses should consider the safety of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians on the streets, shoulders, and sidewalks adjacent to the business driveways to avoid conflicts. For instance, site design should ensure safe and convenient pedestrian access separate from drive-up access that does not require the pedestrian to cross drive-up facilities to reach the pedestrian entry. Prohibit additional drive-through facilities in mixed-use areas.

Policy LU-6.7

Improve the visual appearance of commercial areas through public and private measures for beautification, implementation of design strategies, maintenance, and streetscape improvements. Commercial and mixed-use buildings should conform to form-based codes and design standards and guidelines to achieve urban design objectives and ensure architectural compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Commercial rehabilitation, development, or redevelopment occurring in an area with historic significance should be sensitive to the historic fabric of the area. New commercial and mixed-use development should incorporate landscaping, seating, and other pedestrian-supportive amenities to provide pleasant and comfortable resting, socializing, and picnicking areas for employees and shoppers.

Policy LU-6.8

Require high-quality, safe, and contiguous facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, disabled persons, and users of the public transit services for new commercial and mixed-use development. Design commercial and mixed-use development to provide connections, both vehicular and pedestrian,

to adjoining sites to reduce personal automobile trips. Incorporate sidewalks and internal pathways to enhance pedestrian circulation.

Policy LU-6.9

Coordinate with public transit providers to ensure land uses both foster and are served by transit service, particularly to mixed-use and neighborhood commercial areas.

Policy LU-6.10

Implement maximum automobile parking standards for various types of commercial development. Encourage Transportation Demand Management through shared parking facilities that complement hours of operation of different businesses.

Policy LU-6.11

Ensure parking areas include plantings of vegetation that reduce visual impact through effective screening and the establishment of a substantial tree canopy. Form-based codes and design standards that strongly encourage the placement of parking to the side or rear of buildings and ingress/egress loading through alleys should be implemented. Parking facilities should conform to the parking-related policies of the Transportation Element.

Policy LU-6.12

Concentrate commercial uses in locations that best serve the community, complement stable residential areas, and are attractive to private investment.

Policy LU-6.13

Encourage a mix of retail, office, service, and residential uses in mixed-use and neighborhood commercial areas.

Policy LU-6.14

Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites to the highest and best use allowed under the City's development regulations. Prioritize infill development and the expansion of existing facilities.

Policy LU-6.15

Encourage culturally enriching uses such as libraries, bookstores, galleries, museums, and theaters in mixed-use areas.

Policy LU-6.16

Protect residential areas and public gathering places such as parks, schools and churches, and neighborhood commercial areas from the negative impacts of "adult" business and entertainment establishments.

Essential Public Facilities

Essential public facilities of a local, statewide, or regional nature may range from schools and fire stations to jails, work release facilities, state prisons, airports, and sewage treatment facilities. Some public facilities are controversial and difficult to site because of real and/or perceived impacts. The GMA requires that local comprehensive plans include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. The City of Fircrest does not have any existing

essential public facilities within its incorporated boundary and does not anticipate the addition of essential public facilities in the near future.

Goal LU-7: Allow essential public facilities in locations appropriate for the services provided and the people served, and where they fit in with the natural features of the surrounding development, land, and vegetation.

Policy LU-7.1

Administer a process to site essential public facilities that is consistent with the Growth Management Act and Countywide Planning Policies and that adequately considers impacts of specific uses.

Policy LU-7.2

Enable small public facilities intended to serve a few neighborhoods, such as neighborhood parks, drainage facilities, and electric transformer boxes within a neighborhood.

Policy LU-7.3

Locate public facilities intended to serve the entire city, such as community parks, schools, government offices, and similar facilities, to provide convenient and equitable access for residents who must frequent them, prioritizing historically underserved communities. Large facilities that serve the entire city and are not frequented by residents, such as power substations, water wells, and sewer lift stations, should be located where they will not disrupt the urban landscape or disturb residential and commercial areas with noise, glare, dust, or other types of pollution.

Policy LU-7.4

Site public facilities that have service areas extending substantially beyond the city boundaries at a location appropriate to meet the transportation needs of the users of the facilities. Locate facilities that generate a significant amount of truck, automobile, or foot traffic along arterial streets and convenient to public transit facilities. School facilities should be given flexibility to locate on non-arterial streets. Require developers of these facilities to make infrastructure improvements to support the facilities, which may include street construction, signage, sidewalks, streetlights, bus shelters, benches, parking, bicycle racks, utility lines, and similar improvements.

Policy LU-7.5

Seek mitigation of disproportionate financial burdens resulting from the siting of essential public facilities in Fircrest. Provide accompanying facilities or programs with clear community benefits alongside any federal, state, regional, or county facilities that may impose a detrimental effect on Fircrest if located within the city.

Policy LU-7.6

Require clear justification from federal, state, regional, and county agencies proposing to locate facilities in Fircrest. Explore alternate sites outside of Fircrest through a cooperative inter-jurisdictional approach. If the final site selected is within Fircrest, the site shall be consistent with the provisions of all Fircrest's Comprehensive Plan elements and development regulations.

Policy LU-7.7

Site, design, and buffer all public facilities to fit in harmoniously with the surrounding neighborhood and to conform with the provisions of the urban landscaping and environmental goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan. Special attention should be given to minimizing the noise, light, glare, dust, and traffic associated with essential public facilities.

Policy LU-7.8

Process proposals for public facilities that are not difficult to site using the minimum permitting procedures required to ensure the facilities conform with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan while providing adequate opportunity for public input.

NEW Policy LU-7.9

Consider future climate conditions during the siting and design of capital facilities to ensure they function as intended over their planned life cycle. Site essential public facilities outside of the 500-year floodplain.

Light Industrial Land Use

Light industrial businesses can supply employment opportunities and services for the greater Fircrest community and region. Historically, few properties in Fircrest have supported industrial uses, with the notable exceptions being two sites that hosted industrial activities on Mildred Street. Today, few if any opportunities exist to accommodate light industrial uses on a moderate to large scale. On a smaller scale, however, opportunities exist within Fircrest to support the maker movement, an umbrella term for independent inventors, designers, and technology.

Goal LU-8: Provide for limited light industrial land uses within appropriate locations.

Policy LU-8.1

Support incubator or start-up small-scale light industrial uses in appropriate locations within the mixed-use areas. Support activities pursued by individuals that fit under the maker movement umbrella in appropriate locations while ensuring that sensitive land uses located near such businesses are protected from potential impacts.

Policy LU-8.2

Separate light manufacturing uses that create impacts from incompatible uses, such as creating buffers or zoning that enables transitions from more intensive to less intensive uses. During site plan review, consider potential adverse impacts on nearby uses due to manufacturing operations.

Countywide Center

The northwest corner of Fircrest, which includes the Form-Based Code area, contains the community's most intensively developed concentration of land uses, including retail, office, service, and restaurant uses, and multi-family neighborhoods. This area was approved as a Center of Local Importance (CoLI) by the Pierce County Regional Council (PCRC) in 2015. The city's largest undeveloped tract of land planned and zoned for mixed-use development, is located within this center.

In 2019, the City of Fircrest applied to the PCRC to have a portion of the Northwest Fircrest Corner re-designated as part of the 19th and Mildred Countywide Center with the City of University Place and the City of Tacoma. This Countywide Center is bisected by Mildred Street West, which runs north-south, and by South 19th Street, which runs east-west. The joint center includes Tacoma Community College, the Narrows Plaza, which is part of University Place, and James Center, a Tacoma mixed-use center. In addition, the Tacoma Community College Transit Center is a centrally located multi-modal facility currently serving Pierce Transit and Sound Transit. This location is planned to be the future terminus for the ST3 Link Light Rail Extension.

The 19th and Mildred Countywide Center will allow complementary planning as it accommodates much of the community's planned commercial and residential growth over the next 20 years.

Goal LU-9: Ensure that the 19th and Mildred Countywide Center will be Fircrest's priority location for accommodating growth as laid out under VISION 2050 and the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies. The Center supports a high intensity mix of business, residential, cultural, and recreational uses that may operate during daytime and nighttime hours and provide a sense of place and community.

Policy LU-9.1

Review form-based codes, development standards, design guidelines, level of service standards, public facility plans, and funding strategies to ensure they support focused development within the 19th and Mildred Countywide Center.

Policy LU-9.2

Recognize the 19th and Mildred Countywide Center in all relevant local, regional policy, planning, and programming forums, such as SSHA3P and Thriving Communities.

Policy LU-9.3

Leverage local, regional, state, and federal agency funding for needed public facilities and services within the 19th and Mildred Countywide Center. Prioritize this center for multi-modal transportation projects that will increase mobility to, from, and within this center.



Environmental Quality

Sensitive management of land uses and development and redevelopment projects is essential for preserving and improving the natural, as well as built, environment.

Goal LU-10: Guide land uses and development and redevelopment projects to preserve and improve the natural environment as well as the built environment and protect development from climate change impacts.

Policy LU-10.1

Support the development of green infrastructure to improve the capacity of and complement the services provided by the City's natural systems as future land use becomes more intense to accommodate growth. Recognize green infrastructure as a capital and public asset that can increase water and air quality, sequester carbon, provide habitat, and reduce flooding risk. Support efforts to reserve, enhance and expand the community's inventory of green infrastructure. Examples of strategies include:

- Natural areas, such as critical areas and portions of public lands that are monitored and maintained by community stewards.
- Trees.
- Community gardens.
- Rain gardens and other natural stormwater management facilities.
- Native growth protection habitat areas.

Build or support the building of facilities that mimic natural systems to improve the capacity of, and complement the services provided by, the city's natural systems. These facilities can also include such structures as constructed wetlands, rain gardens, and green roofs. The city and the community may support green infrastructure through a combination of green

development techniques and preserving environmental assets into the future as land use becomes more intense to accommodate growth.

Policy LU-10.2

Enforce standards that will achieve environmentally sensitive development when it occurs within and adjoining critical areas, natural buffers, and areas designated as open space.

Policy LU-10.3

Size and categorize wetlands with respect to their natural features rather than with respect to city boundaries. Wetlands that are contiguous across jurisdictional boundaries shall be treated according to their total size and characteristics and managed as part of a cross-jurisdictional effort.

Policy LU-10.4

Consider the reduction or variation of residential lot sizes, density bonuses, planned developments, clustering of housing, and innovative development techniques to preserve open space, protect critical areas, or provide vegetative buffers which protect the environment while allowing reasonable use of property.

Policy LU-10.5

Consider performance standards as a regulatory alternative to fixed zoning regulations in and around environmentally sensitive areas.

Policy LU-10.6

Structure city facility projects, maintenance and operating procedures, and programs to minimize and mitigate environmental damage, restore, and improve the environment if possible, and increase the environmental awareness of city employees and residents. Use natural boundaries, where possible, to determine the routes and placement of infrastructure connections and improvements.

Policy LU-10.7

Use indigenous or drought tolerant plants in urban landscaping to minimize maintenance costs, conserve water, and provide vegetation with the maximum usefulness as wildlife habitat. Landscaping may also include non-native plant species that are adapted to growing and providing wildlife habitat with minimal human intervention in the local climate and soils.

Policy LU-10.8

Prevent the indiscriminate and unnecessary removal of native trees, shrubs, and ground covers, promote the protection of areas that provide food, cover, resting, and nesting areas for wildlife, and protect and enhance the quality of Leach Creek waters.

NEW Policy LU-10.8

Promote the retention and maintenance of Fircrest's existing tree canopy. Pursue grant opportunities for urban tree canopy studies that track data on tree canopy changes year-over-year. Work to adopt an Urban Forestry Management Program.

Policy LU-10.9

Preserve, protect and, where possible, restore natural habitat critical for the conservation of salmonid species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Protect, maintain, or restore aquatic ecosystems, associated habitats, and aquifers using management zones,

development regulations, incentives for voluntary efforts of private landowners and developers, land use designations, habitat acquisition programs, or habitat restoration projects. Support efforts to remove invasive species and restore areas with native plants.

Policy LU-10.10

Protect natural habitat critical for the conservation of salmonid species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, using planning activities or study techniques that are capable of determining changes in stream hydrology and water quality under different land use scenarios at full build-out of designated land use classifications.

Policy LU-10.11

In the event that a species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act is determined to be located within Fircrest, establish a monitoring and evaluation method that is designed to determine the effectiveness of enhancement and recovery strategies for the species. Develop the methodology with technical assistance from appropriate state or federal resource agencies.

Policy LU-10.12

The City recognizes that the best available science to address listed species recovery is evolving. Apply an adaptive management strategy to determine how well the objectives of listed species recovery and critical habitat preservation or restoration are being achieved. Incorporate the results of pilot developments into land use regulations, zoning, and technical standards.

Policy LU-10.13

Achieve “no net loss” of wetlands by ecological function and values. Protect and enhance wetlands where possible to maintain and increase their carbon sequestration potential.

Policy LU-10.14

Require that development is properly located and constructed with respect to the limitations of the underlying soils, geological hazards, and areas subject to flooding.

Policy LU-10.15

Manage development activities and land uses within the city to minimize noise; light and glare; and water, soil, and air pollution. Work with adjacent jurisdictions and property owners to minimize transmission of pollutants from development activities and industrial, commercial, and public facility land uses near the city's boundary.

Policy LU-10.16

Consider the adoption of new development controls and guidelines designed to avoid or mitigate adverse cumulative air quality impacts prior to project approval. Require air quality impact analyses for major new developments that could adversely impact the air quality levels in the vicinity. Such analyses should address the policies listed in Transportation Goal 3 that are intended to promote the reduction of criteria pollutants for mobile sources (WAC 173-420-080). In Fircrest, criteria pollutants include ozone (HC and NOx) and carbon monoxide (CO).



Fircrest Park and the Edwards Family Aquatic Center at Sunset

Water Resources

Goal LU-11: Manage surface, ground, storm, waste, and creek waters in an ecologically responsible manner and as interconnected components of the region's watershed to achieve a healthy watershed that is resilient to climate change.

Policy LU-11.1

Conduct private and public development and redevelopment projects in a way that preserves or improves the viability of each component of the water ecosystem and of the entire ecosystem.

Policy LU-11.2

Improve the quality of stormwater runoff, minimize flooding due to stormwater runoff, and prevent the erosion of land by stormwater runoff, to maintain natural aquatic communities and beneficial uses.

Enforce development regulations to minimize stormwater runoff as a result of development projects by limiting grading and clearing of a development site only to the extent reasonably needed to accommodate the development project, minimizing roadways and other impervious surfaces in the completed project, and encouraging the use of natural vegetation and ground covers during development and in the completed project.

Policy LU-11.3

Require effective erosion control during and after tree or vegetation removal where removal of trees or other vegetation may result in runoff and erosion. Require restoration and replanting consistent with urban landscaping guidelines and significant tree retention and protection standards where extensive vegetation removal occurs in order to mitigate heat, promote mental and physical health, and enhance the tree canopy.

Policy LU-11.4

Require all new development and redevelopment to use the sanitary sewer system. Require development currently using septic systems to convert to sanitary sewer when any portion of the on-site system fails, functions improperly, or needs replacement, or whenever a community or neighborhood sewer system is extended by local improvement methods or becomes reasonably available by other means. Establish a City ordinance requiring property adjacent to presently existing accessible sewer mains to make connections within a specified time.

Policy LU-11.5

Structure City procedures and programs to minimize pollutants entering storm, surface, ground, and creek waters from City-owned and City-maintained properties. Encourage residents to minimize non-point pollutants originating from landscapes, automobiles, and similar sources.

Policy LU-11.6

Closely monitor the quality of groundwater, and maintain or increase protective measures to ensure an uncontaminated water supply that prevents impacts on human health. Implement regulations regarding installation, inspection, maintenance, and removal of above ground and below ground tanks designed to store potentially contaminating materials such as heating oil and industrial chemicals. Develop and implement regulations as necessary to ensure management of potentially contaminating wastes from commercial and industrial operations. Develop other protective regulations as appropriate to protect groundwater.

Policy LU-11.7

Structure City procedures, programs, and water rates to minimize the city's consumption of water and to improve the water conservation habits of Fircrest's residents.

Policy LU-11.8

Require, Low Impact Development (LID) in areas where soils and geology support it to protect groundwater used for the public water supply in accordance with EPA Phase II Western Washington Municipal Stormwater Permit directives.

Review and revise development policies and regulations to support the use of LID more fully where feasible, the city should review and revise its, as warranted, to improve their effectiveness. The city should consider adoption of the Low Impact Development Technical Guidance Manual for Puget Sound. This manual was prepared by the Washington State

University Extension and Puget Sound Partnership with the participation and support of a broad range of stakeholders.

Policy LU-11.9

Promote use of techniques, such as current use taxation programs, stormwater utility funds, conservation easements, sensitive site planning, best land management practices and flexible regulations, to help retain and protect open space, environmentally sensitive areas, and unique natural features.

Policy LU-11.10

Participate in regional watershed planning efforts to maintain natural hydrologic functions.

Development Regulations and Permit Processing

Goal LU-12: Continue to refine the permit process for development and other local government approvals, as needed, to ensure that it is timely and fair to all affected parties.

Policy LU-12.1

Periodically review and revise development regulations to ensure that they are consistent with and relate directly to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and other state and federal mandates. Eliminate duplicative and unnecessary regulations.

Policy LU-12.2

Periodically review and modify procedures for processing permits to improve interdepartmental coordination, ensure uniform processing for all permit applications, enhance communication with applicants, combine and simplify processing steps, and minimize processing time.

Policy LU-12.3

Solicit input from developers, business proprietors, residents, and other interested parties concerning updates to regulations and permit processing procedures.

Policy LU-12.4

Process permit applications for minor projects of a routine nature at the staff level without requiring public hearings. However, the streamlining of permit processing procedures should not be done at the expense of public input concerning permit applications of a non-routine, major, or controversial nature. The public should be given ample opportunity to review and comment on major, non-routine, or controversial development permit applications.

Policy LU-12.5

Maintain adequate staff and equipment to ensure meaningful revision and enforcement of development regulations and timely processing of permits.

Policy LU-12.6

Consider the impact of land use ordinances and policies on the rights of private property owners. Take steps to ensure the rights of private property owners are protected through a cost effective and timely appeal process.

Policy LU-12.7

Support local community groups in critical habitat restoration and enhancement efforts through reduced or waiver of permit fees and streamlined permitting procedures.



Regents Boulevard Community Center Looking West

Inter-jurisdictional Planning

Goal LU-13: Ensure that decisions, policies, and activities of other governmental and advisory agencies that may affect Fircrest are consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Encourage cooperative, coordinated inter-jurisdictional efforts consistent with this goal, including coordination with interested Indigenous tribes.

Policy LU-13.1

Participate in various county and regional organizations concerned with the implementation of the Growth Management Act and the planning and funding of transportation projects, such as SSHA3P, Thriving Communities, Pierce County Growth Management Coordinating Community, and Puget Sound Regional Council.

Policy LU-13.2

Support the development of inter-jurisdictional programs that address regional problems and issues that affect the city and the Puget Sound region. Examples of regional issues include affordable housing, transportation, health care, open space corridors, and economic growth.

Policy LU-13.3

Develop and adopt interlocal agreements to address concerns relating to land use, new development, and redevelopment. Attempt to reach agreements with adjacent jurisdictions to ensure that land uses adjacent to Fircrest are compatible with Fircrest land uses. Annually review University Place and Tacoma Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects to understand impacts to Fircrest. Seek agreements with adjacent jurisdictions to minimize and mitigate the negative impacts to Fircrest of land uses and development in adjacent jurisdictions.

Policy LU-13.4

Work with adjacent jurisdictions to identify and protect natural habitat networks that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Networks should link large, protected, or significant blocks of fish and wildlife habitats within and between jurisdictions to achieve a continuous countywide network. Establish informational sharing workshops or present information at established coordinating committees. Whenever possible, utilize watershed boundaries instead of jurisdictional boundaries for plans and studies.

Policy LU-13.5

Work with adjacent jurisdictions to coordinate watershed/aquatic restoration planning and implementation activities within a watershed such as fish barrier removal and culvert replacement.

Economic Development

Fircrest and the surrounding region will have a prospering and sustainable regional economy by supporting businesses and job creation, investing in all people, sustaining environmental quality, and creating great central places, diverse communities, and high-quality of life.

Goal LU-14: Support small and locally owned businesses, recognizing their importance in both job growth and promoting sustainable economic development. Support key employment sectors in the region including established and emerging industry clusters that create wealth by selling products or services to outside markets, industries involved in trade-related activities, startups, and new businesses that provide family-wage jobs.

Policy LU-14.1

Foster a supportive environment for business startups, small businesses, and locally owned businesses to help them continue to prosper. Maintain a list of new businesses in the City and welcome them during grand openings or feature them in the Town Topics newsletter.

Policy LU-14.2

Encourage the private, public, and non-profit sectors to incorporate environmental and social responsibility into their practices.

Policy LU-14.3

Promote economic activity and employment growth that creates widely shared prosperity and sustains a diversity of family wage jobs for Fircrest's residents.

Policy LU-14.4

Sustain and enhance arts and cultural institutions to foster an active and vibrant community life.

Policy LU-14.5

Ensure that economic development sustains and respects Fircrest's environmental quality.

Policy LU-14.6

Utilize urban design strategies and approaches to ensure that changes to the built environment preserve and enhance Fircrest's unique attributes and distinctive identity in recognition of the economic value of sense of place.

Policy LU-14.7

Concentrate economic growth in the Form-Based Code area in a manner that is coordinated with economic growth and infrastructure development within the adjacent University Place Regional Growth Center, Tacoma's James Center Mixed- Use Center, and Tacoma Community College in order to strengthen the local and regional economy and promote economic opportunity.

NEW Policy LU-14.8

Ensure that Fircrest's local economy is resilient to climate disruptions and supports businesses' efforts to bolster climate preparedness to support continuity of operations.

Climate Change

NEW Goal LU-15: Prepare for the impacts of climate change that are expected to impact Fircrest, prioritizing preparedness among low-income and historically marginalized communities.

NEW Policy LU-15.1

Protect and enhance street trees to increase shade, reduce the urban heat island effect, increase carbon sequestration, improve air quality, and improve the mental and physical health of residents, prioritizing frontline communities, historically marginalized neighborhoods, and those that will be most affected by climate change.

NEW Policy LU-15.2



Interagency Agreement with

City of Fircrest

through

Growth Management Services

**Contract Number:
24-63610-207**

For

2023-2025 Climate Planning Grant

Dated: Date of Execution

Establish development regulations that incorporate best practices for reducing extreme heat, the urban heat island effect, wildfire, flooding, and other climate-exacerbated hazards and impacts.

NEW Policy 15.3

Prioritize low-income and historically marginalized populations to ensure they will not bear the brunt of climate change impacts.

NEW Goal LU-16: Support regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. Other goals and policies throughout this plan also contribute to this goal, as outlined in the Climate element of this Comprehensive Plan.

NEW Policy LU-16.1

Establish greenhouse gas emission reduction goals that align with state and countywide goals. Specifically, create plans for vehicle fleet electrification, City building insulation and energy efficiency, and carbon capture of utility emissions.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Land use designations for this Comprehensive Plan have been determined largely by existing land uses and development opportunity. Fircrest is extensively developed and provides limited infill development opportunities. Much of the development in Fircrest is recent enough that redevelopment opportunities are also limited. Thus, goals and policies, while addressing infill development and redevelopment, also focus on the ongoing maintenance, refinement, and improvement of the existing community. This Comprehensive Plan emphasizes maintaining and enhancing Fircrest's unique form and design through land use designations and goals and policies that cultivate the presence of desirable features in existing neighborhoods and through development and redevelopment.

Figure LU-2 shows Fircrest's land use designations, which include:

- Low Density Residential
- Low Density Residential - Conservation
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential - Traditional Community Design
- High Density Residential
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Public and Quasi-Public Facilities

The remainder of this section defines each land use designation for Fircrest.

Low Density Residential

LAND USES

The Low Density Residential designation generally applies to areas of the community that were platted and developed for single-family dwellings prior to 2000. These areas are intended to include the following housing types:

- Single-family dwelling units
- Attached and detached accessory dwelling units
- Group family homes, including adult family homes
- Assisted living facilities, congregate care facilities, convalescent homes, hospice care centers, residential care facilities and residential treatment facilities in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan
- Duplex dwelling units when allowed within a zoning district
- Existing duplex or multi-family dwelling units, which may be renovated or redeveloped as duplex or multi-family dwelling units in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan

Additional uses in Low Density Residential areas include public facilities that support residential neighborhoods. For example, streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, bike paths and associated facilities, transit facilities including stops, shelters and benches, neighborhood parks, and utilities will be allowed. Infrastructure for utilities may include, but is

not limited to: storm drainage, power, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. In addition, other small public facilities compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed. Home occupations that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed.

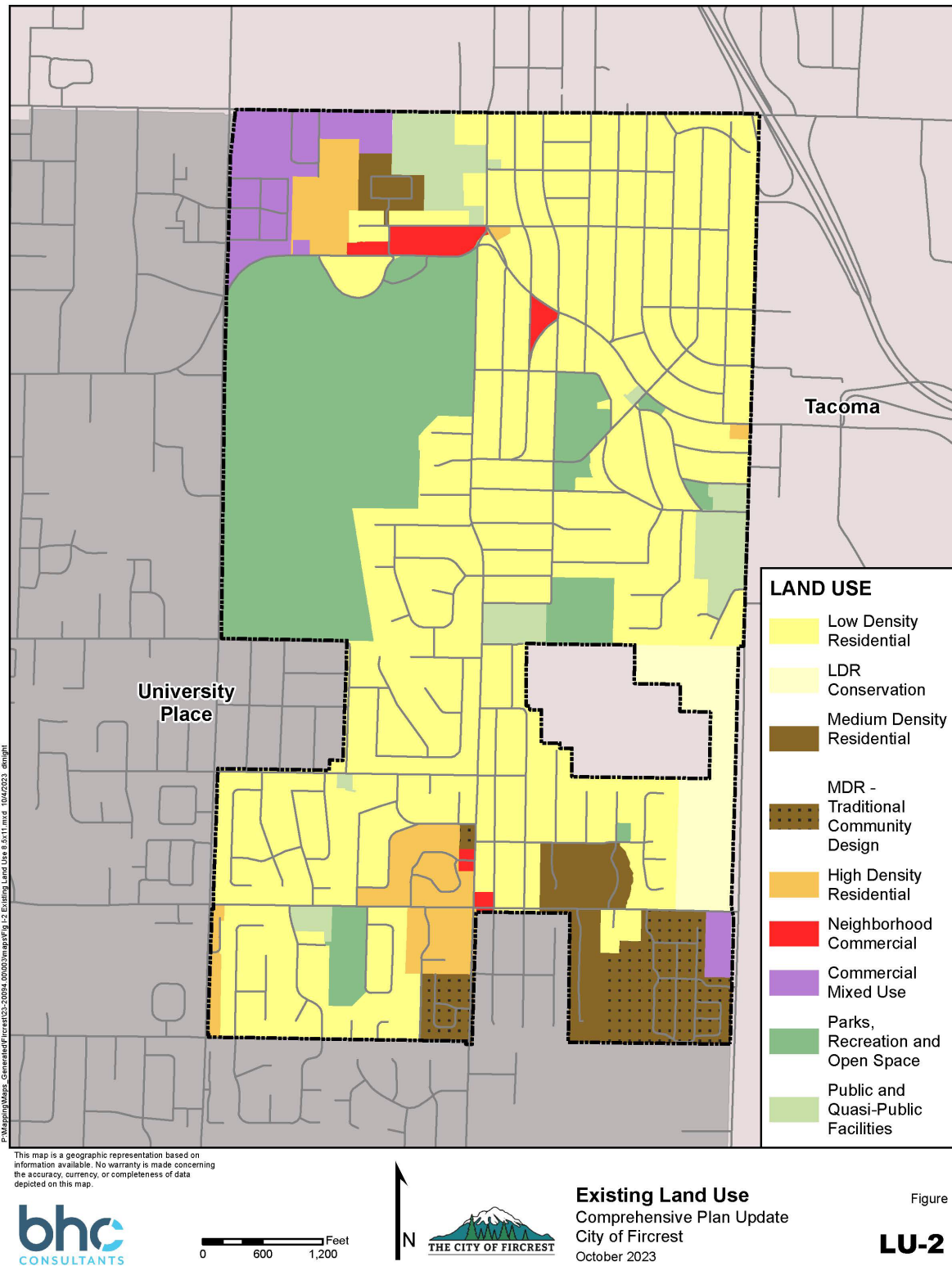
BUILDING INTENSITY

A building intensity of four to six dwelling units per acre may be achieved in Low Density Residential areas, depending on the zoning classification and development pattern. Middle housing laws allow up to two middle housing units like duplexes per residential lot. Allowable building intensity is limited by bulk regulations, impervious surface coverage limits, and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)).



Espresso Yourself, one of Fircrest's Small Businesses

Figure LU-2 Future Land Use Designations Map



Low Density Residential – Conservation

LAND USES

The Low Density Residential – Conservation designation generally applies to undeveloped environmentally-sensitive tracts of land. These areas are intended to include the following housing types:

- Single-family dwelling units, including cottage housing and small lot developments
- Duplexes
- Attached and detached accessory dwelling units
- Group family homes, including adult family homes
- Assisted living facilities, including congregate care facilities, convalescent homes, hospice care centers, residential care facilities, and residential treatment facilities in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan

Additional uses in Low Density Residential -- Conservation areas include public facilities that support residential neighborhoods. For example, streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, bike paths and associated facilities, transit facilities including stops, shelters and benches, neighborhood parks, and utilities will be allowed. Infrastructure for utilities may include, but is not limited to: storm drainage, power, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. In addition, other small public facilities compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed. Home occupations that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed.

BUILDING INTENSITY

Low Density Residential -- Conservation areas contain significant physical constraints, which place practical limitations on building intensity. Physical constraints include wetlands, frequently flooded areas, and steep slopes. Properties located within these areas are subject to the city's critical area regulations, which may further limit building intensities. New development in these areas shall be clustered to provide for the retention of substantial portions of the properties as undeveloped open space; avoid critical areas; and generally, avoid steep slopes. In consideration of these physical site constraints and regulatory constraints, a base density of four dwelling units per acre may be achieved in Low Density Residential -- Conservation areas. This density may be increased to a maximum of five to eight dwelling units per acre when innovative designs, including small lot development or cottage housing are used.

Allowable building intensity is limited by bulk regulations, impervious surface coverage limits, and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)). Innovation in site and building design will be encouraged in accord with Comprehensive Plan goals and policies; appropriate buffering, design features, and amenities must be provided.

Medium Density Residential

LAND USES

The Medium Density Residential designation generally applies to areas previously developed for single-family attached and duplex housing. These areas are intended to include the following housing types:

- Single-family attached dwelling units
- Attached and detached accessory dwelling units
- Group family homes, including adult family homes
- Duplex dwelling units
- Assisted living facilities, including congregate care facilities, convalescent homes, hospice care centers, residential care facilities and residential treatment facilities in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan
- Existing multi-family dwelling units, which may be renovated or redeveloped as multi-family dwelling units in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan
- New multi-family dwelling units in tracts containing critical areas or significant open space, when clustered to avoid critical areas or to retain significant open space, and provided that overall density does not exceed ten dwelling units per acre. In such cases, innovation in site and building design will be encouraged in accord with Comprehensive Plan goals and policies; appropriate buffering, design features, and amenities must be provided; and no more than four dwelling units per building will be allowed.

Additional uses in Medium Density Residential areas include public facilities that support residential neighborhoods. For example, streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, bike paths and associated facilities, transit facilities including stops, shelters and benches, neighborhood parks, and utilities will be allowed. Infrastructure for utilities may include, but is not limited to: storm drainage, power, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. In addition, other small public facilities compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed. Home occupations that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed.

BUILDING INTENSITY

A maximum building intensity of eight dwelling units per acre may be achieved in Medium Density Residential areas. Allowable building intensity is limited by bulk regulation impervious surface limits, and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)).

Medium Density Residential – Traditional Community Design

LAND USES

Medium Density Residential -- Traditional Community Design designations apply to The Commons and Fircrest Greens neighborhoods and other smaller sites. These areas are intended to include the following housing types:

- Single-family attached and detached dwelling units, including cottage housing and small lot developments
- Attached and detached accessory dwelling units
- Group family homes, including adult family homes
- Duplex dwelling units
- Assisted living facilities including congregate care facilities, convalescent homes, hospice care centers, residential care facilities, and residential treatment facilities in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan

- Multi-family dwelling units within a structure containing no more than eight dwelling units, when clustered to avoid critical areas or to retain significant open space

Additional uses in Medium Density Residential -- Traditional Community Design areas include public facilities that support residential neighborhoods. For example, streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, bike paths and associated facilities, transit facilities including stops, shelters and benches, and utilities will be allowed. Infrastructure for utilities may include, but is not limited to: storm drainage, power, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. In addition, other small public facilities compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed. Home occupations that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed.

BUILDING INTENSITY

Medium Density Residential -- Traditional Community Design areas may contain physical constraints, such as wetlands, which place practical limitations on building intensity within portions of an area. Property located within such areas is subject to the city's critical area regulations, which may further limit building intensities. In consideration of these physical site constraints and regulatory constraints, a maximum building intensity of ten dwelling units per acre may be achieved in Medium Density Residential -- Traditional Community Design areas. Allowable building intensity is limited by bulk regulations, impervious surface limits and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)).

High Density Residential

LAND USES

High Density Residential designations generally apply to areas developed primarily for multi-family housing, and to a lesser extent duplex housing. These areas are intended to include the following housing types:

- Duplex dwelling units
- Group family homes, including adult family homes
- Multi-family dwelling units
- Assisted living facilities, including congregate care facilities, convalescent homes, hospice care centers, residential care facilities and residential treatment facilities in accord with the applicable goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan

Additional uses in High Density Residential areas include public facilities that support residential neighborhoods. For example: streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, bike paths and associated facilities, transit facilities including stops, shelters and benches, neighborhood parks, and utilities will be allowed. Infrastructure for utilities may include, but is not limited to: storm drainage, power, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities. In addition, other public facilities compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed. Home occupations that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood will be allowed.

BUILDING INTENSITY

A building intensity of 20 to 30 dwelling units per acre may be achieved in High Density Residential areas, depending on the zoning classification and development pattern.

Rehabilitation or redevelopment of existing development will be in accord with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan and applicable design standards and guidelines. Allowable building intensity is limited by bulk regulations impervious surface limits and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)).

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

LAND USES

Lands designated as Parks, Recreation, and Open Space include tracts that are publicly and privately owned. Land uses in Parks, Recreation and Open Space areas, subject to restrictions of the critical area ordinance where applicable are intended to include:

- Neighborhood parks designed to meet the needs of residents and employees in the immediate area
- Community parks designed to meet the needs of the entire Fircrest community
- Recreational buildings including facilities such as gymnasiums, basketball courts, community kitchens, banquet halls, indoor stages, meeting rooms, etc.
- Outdoor recreational facilities such as swings, all-age, all-ability climbing toys, picnic areas, swimming pools, golf courses, disc golf courses, baseball diamonds, volleyball courts, pickleball courts, lawn bowling lanes, outdoor stages, etc.
- Trails and paths for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Transit facilities including stops, shelters and benches which serve the park, recreation facility, open space site or adjacent uses
- Preserved natural areas characterized by native vegetation and wildlife with educational signage
- Residences may be developed on private property that is designated as park, recreation or open space but that has not been permanently dedicated as park, recreation, or open space, provided significant tracts are permanently dedicated for parks, recreation, or open space at the time of development approval

BUILDING INTENSITY

Building intensity for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space areas will vary widely. There will be no building intensity in preserved natural areas. For other park and recreation facilities, building intensity will be determined by the purpose of the facility. Because park and recreation facilities may occur in conjunction with other land uses, any park or recreation facility that is proposed must harmonize with surrounding development and must not exceed the building intensity of the surrounding area. Ideally, park and recreation facilities will provide visual relief in the urban landscape by having a significantly lower building intensity than the surrounding development.

Neighborhood Commercial

LAND USES

Neighborhood Commercial areas provide for small-scale shops that offer retail goods and personal services primarily for the needs of nearby neighborhoods. These areas are intended to reduce vehicle trips by providing convenient shopping for nearby residents. Neighborhood Commercial areas are located on transit routes, and site and building design encourage pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use. A pedestrian orientation is required for new development

and new automobile-oriented uses are prohibited. Neighborhood Commercial areas are limited in size to keep them in scale with the neighborhoods they serve.

Limited residential uses above the ground floor level of mixed-use buildings are encouraged, and culturally enriching uses will also be allowed. Additional automobile-oriented businesses such as restaurants with drive-up windows are prohibited in Neighborhood Commercial areas. Businesses providing delivery services may be permitted provided they meet development standards specified in the Land Development Code.

High-quality landscaping helps make Neighborhood Commercial areas attractive and functional and minimizes negative impacts on nearby uses. Other measures, such as buffering requirements and limits on hours of operation, may be used to reduce impacts to nearby residences. Public facilities, including transit facilities such as stops, shelters and benches that support development in the commercial areas will be allowed as will quasi-public facilities that are compatible with the surrounding development.

BUILDING INTENSITY

Allowable building intensity for new development, rehabilitation, and redevelopment in Neighborhood Commercial areas is limited by bulk regulations, impervious surface limits and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)).

Mixed-Use

LAND USES

Mixed-Use areas provide opportunities for a broad mix of retail and office uses, personal, professional and business services, institutions, recreational and cultural uses, residential uses, and other facilities that provide services for the needs of nearby residents and businesses and the surrounding community. Development standards support moderate to high density residential development and moderately intense commercial development. In addition, Mixed-Use areas provide limited opportunities for light industrial activities that enhance the city's economic base and provide employment for residents in the area in a manner that is compatible with neighboring commercial and residential uses.

Public facilities, including transit facilities such as stops, shelters and benches that support development in the Mixed-Use areas, will be allowed, as will quasi-public facilities that are compatible with the surrounding development.

DEVELOPMENT FORM

Site and building design support pedestrian, bicycle and transit use while accommodating automobiles. As properties redevelop, a fine-grained street grid and block pattern are established. Community greens, squares, plazas, and other publicly accessible spaces are incorporated into mixed-use developments that include a variety of complementary uses. High-quality architecture, landscaping, streetscape, artwork, and other public amenities contribute to making the area inviting, attractive, functional, and vibrant for residents, employees, and visitors alike.

Buildings are close to property lines and occupied with ground floor retail, service, and other active uses along commercially viable corridors. Residential uses on the ground floor provide

appropriate frontage that ensure privacy to the units. Units are accessed directly from the street. Upper floors and the floor area behind shopfronts are flexible for a wide variety of office, lodging, and housing uses. Building mass along the street's edge is articulated with balconies and terraces and building bases include human scaled detailing.

Active streetscapes provide continuity with adjacent areas. A range of tree-lined walkable streets continues the adjacent street pattern while also providing opportunities for future development to extend the street grid. Commercial frontages such as shopfronts, arcades, or galleries; wide sidewalks; and street trees encourage interesting, safe, and comfortable walking environment, while yards porches, dooryards, stoops, forecourts and light courts may extend privacy to residential frontages.

BUILDING INTENSITY

Allowable building intensity for new development, rehabilitation, and redevelopment in Mixed-Use areas is regulated by form-based codes, bulk regulations in the MUN and MUU zones, and other provisions specified in the city's Land Development Code ([Title 22 FMC](#)).

Public and Quasi-Public Facilities

LAND USES

Areas designated for Public and Quasi-Public Facilities are now used for, or could be used for, public facilities such as schools, libraries, parks, major utilities, and other government-owned facilities. Designated areas are also suitable for quasi-public facilities such as privately-owned utility facilities, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, and private organizations offering services complementing or supplementing services typically offered by government agencies.

To improve visual clarity on the land use map, public facilities that occur throughout the city, such as paths and utilities, are not shown on the land use map. Such facilities are discussed in the Transportation, Utilities, and Capital Facilities Elements of this Comprehensive Plan.

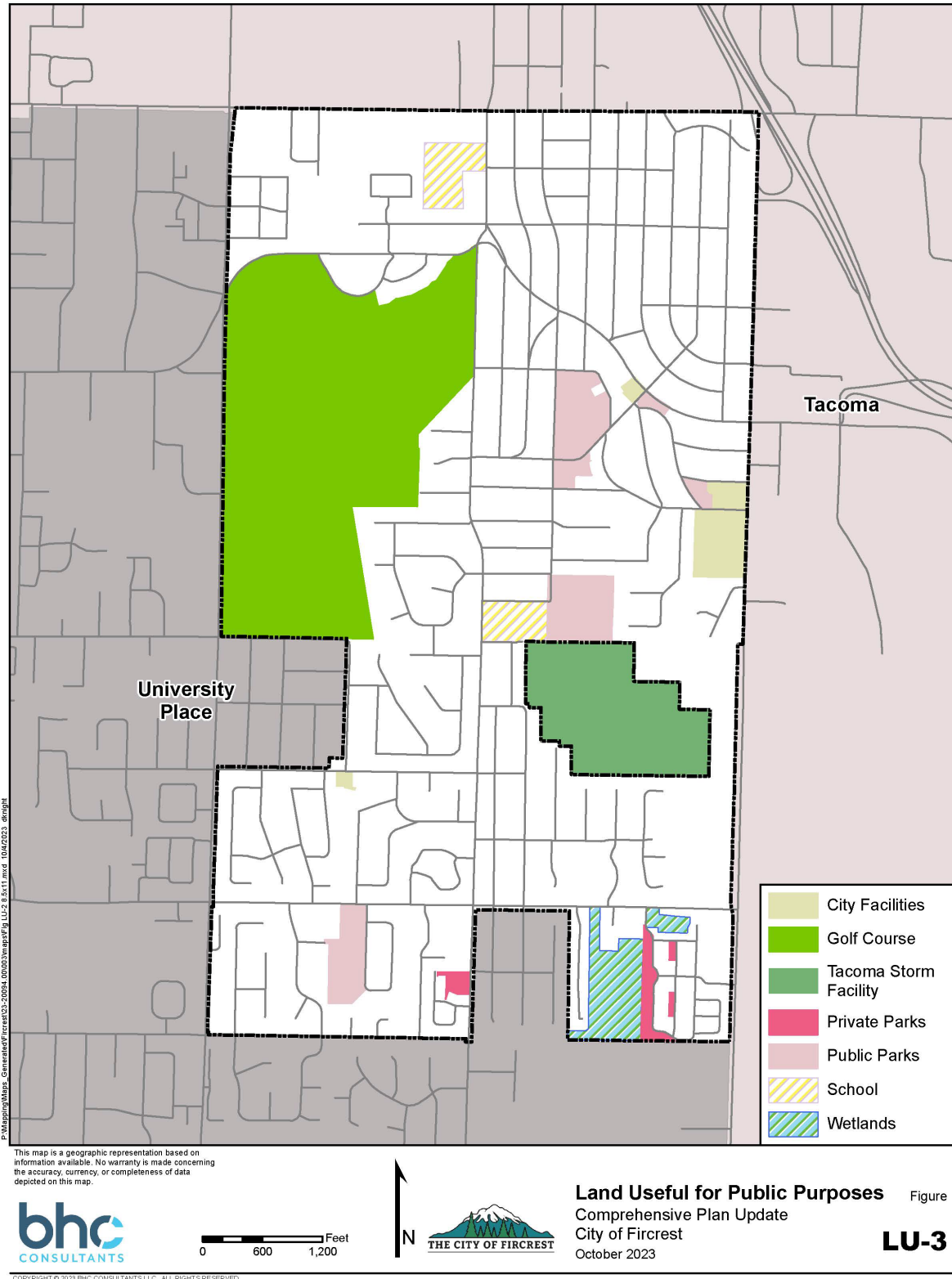
BUILDING INTENSITY

Building intensity for a public or quasi-public facility depends upon the purpose of the facility. Because public facilities may occur in conjunction with other land uses, any public facility that is proposed must harmonize with surrounding development and must not exceed the building intensity of the surrounding area.

LANDS USEFUL FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES

Figure LU-3 indicates lands useful for public purposes. Lands useful for parks, recreation, and open space are, by definition, useful for public purposes. In addition, lands that may be useful for public purposes include those designated Public and Quasi-Public Facilities, Mixed-Use, and Neighborhood Commercial. These designations are shown in Figure LU-2. Public or quasi-public facilities are considered a secondary use in commercial areas and must be compatible with surrounding development. All public and quasi-public facilities must be appropriately sited and buffered in accord with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Figure LU-3 Lands Useful for Public Purposes Map



APPENDIX A: LAND USE

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LAND USE INVENTORY

Low density residential land use and zoning classifications comprise the greatest share of the city's land uses. The City of Fircrest's existing Future Land Use Designations establishes 56% of the city's land as Low Density Residential (Table 1).

Table 1 Existing Comp Plan Land Use Designation Inventory

Land Use Designation	Acres	Percentage of the City
High Density Residential	45	4%
Low Density Residential	567	56%
Low Density Residential Conservation	34	3%
Medium Density Residential	31	3%
Medium Density Residential - Traditional Community Design	41	4%
Commercial Mixed Use	36	4%
Neighborhood Commercial	11	1%
Public and Quasi-Public Facilities	38	4%
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	202	20%
Total	1,005	-

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The next greatest share among the City's Land Use designations was Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, which includes the golf course, at 20% of the City's land area. When considering the golf course alone, it accounts for 17% of the city's land.

Table 2 Zoning District Inventory

Land Use Designation	Acres	Percentage of the City
Golf Course (GC)	169	17%
Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MUN)	25	2%
Mixed-Use Urban (MUU)	11	1%
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	9	1%
Neighborhood Office (NO)	2	0%
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS)	33	3%
Residential-10-Traditional Community Design District (R-10-TCD)	41	4%
Residential-20 (R-20)	31	3%
Residential-30 (R-30)	14	1%
Residential-4 (R-4)	338	34%
Residential-4-Conservation District (R-4-C)	34	3%
Residential-6 (R-6)	268	27%
Residential-8 (R-8)	31	3%
Total	1,005	-

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

LAND CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Pierce County completed a Buildable Lands Report in 2021. The report estimated that the city has a total of 44.3 developable acres. This included deductions for critical areas, infrastructure, and market factors. This report was used to assess housing capacity and demand over the next 20 years. See Housing Element Appendix for the full analysis.

The report also estimated the capacity for additional jobs in the city considering commercial and mixed-use zones, summarized in the following Table 3. The total capacity of 199 additional jobs exceeds the projected employment growth of an additional 113 jobs. Fircrest will then be able to accommodate job growth without any land use changes.

Table 3 Job Capacity by Zone

Zone	Vacant	Underutilized	Total
MUN + MUU*	40	154	194
GC	0	0	0
NC	0	0	0
NO	0	0	0
PROS	0	0	0
R10TCD	0	0	0
R20	0	0	0
R4	0	1	1
R4C	3	0	3
R6	0	1	1
R8	0	0	0
Total	43	156	199

*The study reflected an older zoning designation, CMU, which is now split into the two zones, MUN and MUU.
Source: Pierce County Buildable Lands Report, November 11th, 2022, 4th Edition.

CRITICAL AREAS AND NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS

The GMA includes a requirement to designate, classify, and enact development standards for critical areas. Critical areas are defined as the following areas and ecosystems: wetlands, areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas.

According to Pierce County GIS data, mapped wetlands account for most the city's critical areas, totaling 12% of the city area (see Table 4Table 4). Additionally, the city falls within the Central Pierce County Aquifer.

Table 4 Critical Areas Inventory

Critical Areas	Acres	Percentage of the City
Wetlands	119.8	12%
Regulated Floodplains (100- and 500-Year)	15.1	2%
Total	134.9	1%

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Figures are estimates based on the best available data. Site critical area studies may result in greater or smaller areas.

Source: Pierce County Data.

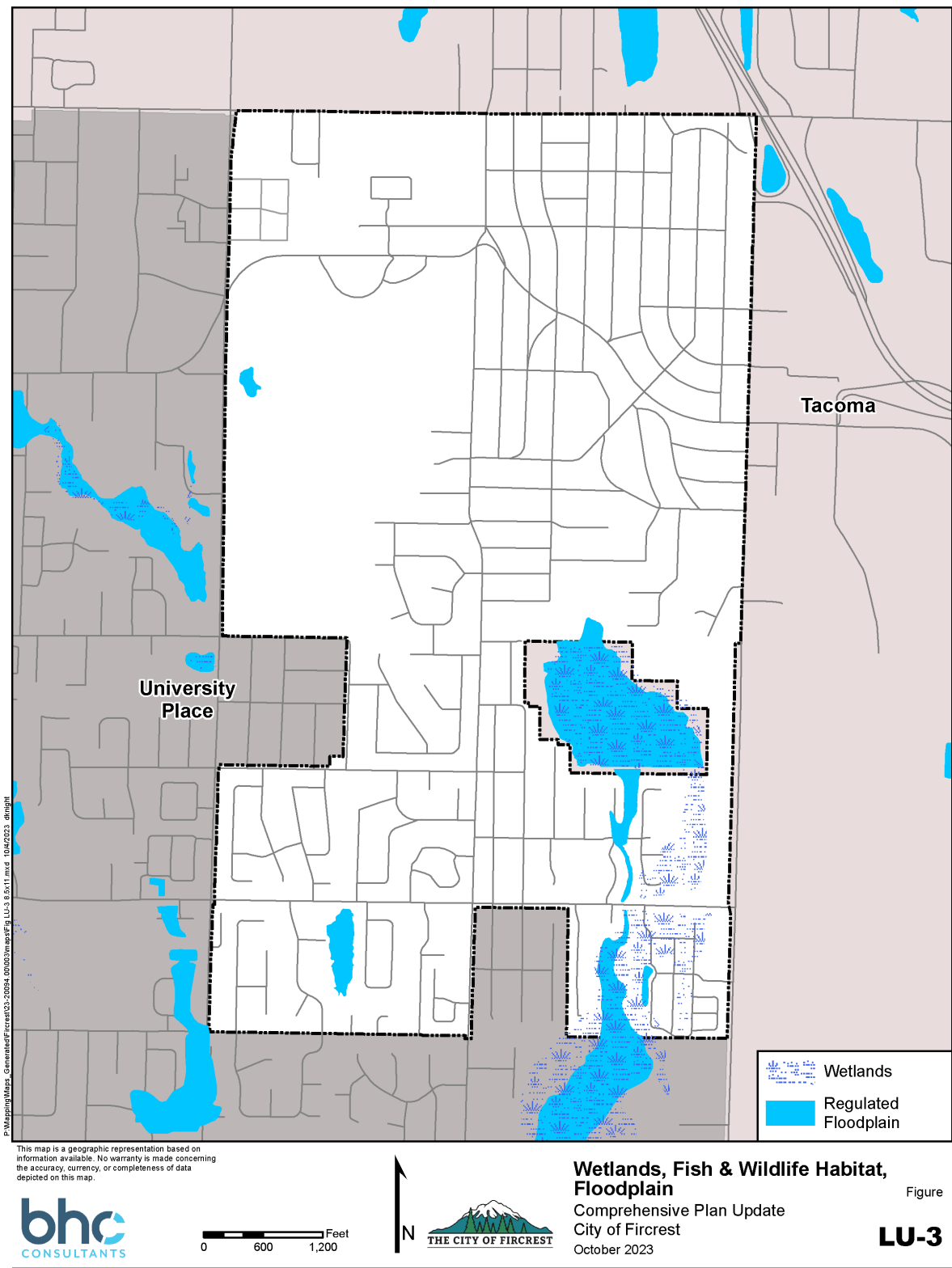
Figure 1, on page 5, identifies lands for which the presence of wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and frequently flooded areas is indicated. Areas with a critical

recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water are not illustrated because the entire city is within the Clover-Chambers Creek Groundwater Management Area, which has a critical recharging effect on the Tacoma and Clover-Chambers Creek Aquifers. The inclusion of these maps in the Land Use Element does not preclude the designation of additional critical areas that may be identified after the adoption of this plan.

The City of Fircrest adopted interim development regulations for critical areas in February 1993. These regulations were updated in 2005 to incorporate the best available science and special consideration for anadromous fisheries as required by RCW 36.70A.172. The city subsequently updated these regulations in 2015 to ensure consistency with state law as part of the mandatory GMA Update for comprehensive plans and development regulations.

The GMA also requires the designation of natural resource lands of long-term commercial significance, including forest, agriculture, and mineral resource lands. Natural resource lands are not found within the City of Fircrest.

Figure 1 Critical Areas



PLANNED LAND USE IN ADJACENT JURISDICTIONS

Fircrest lies directly adjacent to the City of Tacoma and the City of University place. Fircrest's land uses and designations adjacent to these cities should be compatible. In Tacoma, notable uses adjacent to Fircrest include the Recover and Transfer Center to the east and Tacoma Community College to the north. In University Place, the northwest boundary of Fircrest is adjacent to commercial and retail uses along South Mildred, while the southern boundary is mostly adjacent to residential uses.

Sound Transit plans on opening a light rail station along S. 19th Street by 2041. Light rail has implications for adjacent land uses as transit opportunities increase. The City of Fircrest currently has mapped Mixed Use zones to accommodate a diversity of uses on the northwestern portion of the city, and land uses will likely shift as developer interests increase in anticipation of the light rail station.

Fircrest will coordinate with other jurisdictions as appropriate to address consistency and compatibility issues.

Major Characteristics – Adjacent Land Use Designations

Fircrest lies directly adjacent to the City of Tacoma and the City of University Place. Because of this, Fircrest's land uses and designations should be aware of those cities' land uses adjoined to Fircrest's city boundaries. In Tacoma, notable uses adjacent to Fircrest include the Recover and Transfer Center to the east and Tacoma Community College to the north. In University Place, the northwest boundary of Fircrest adjoins commercial and retail uses along South Mildred. The southern boundary adjoins mostly residential uses in University Place.

Sound Transit plans on opening a light rail station along S. 19th Street by 2041. Light rail has implications for the land uses adjacent to Mildred and S. 19th Street as transit opportunities increase. The City of Fircrest currently has mapped Mixed Use zones to accommodate a diversity of uses on the northwestern portion of the city, and land uses will likely shift as developer interests increase in anticipation of the station.