

# CHAPTER 9: North Central Neighborhood Element

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The North Central Neighborhood is Des Moines' primary location dedicated for office, research and development, manufacturing, distribution, and large-scale industrial development. It is envisioned as a thriving center for trade-related activity that generates new family wage jobs and revenue for the City and advances the region's vitality by linking businesses to world markets via Sea-Tac Airport.

To date, Des Moines, the Port of Seattle, City of SeaTac, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and other public agencies have made significant investments in the City's transportation infrastructure to improve access and freight mobility to serve future development:

- **Transportation Gateway Project** entails upgrading two city arterials: S. 216th Street between SR 99 and 19th Avenue S., and 24th Avenue S. north of S. 216th Street. Improvements include 5 lane cross sections with pedestrian, bicycle and urban design elements and a new signal at 20th Avenue S. The 24th Avenue S. and S. 216th Street, Segment 2 (18th Avenue S. to 24th Avenue S.) improvements are complete. Segment 1b of the project focusing on S. 216th Street remains to be completed and is included in the City's Transportation Improvement Plan 2023-2042.
- **28th/24th Avenue S. Connection** includes a new south access road completed by the City of SeaTac to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac Airport) with a 5 lane, principal arterial that parallels SR99. Construction of the corridor was completed in 2018. The multimodal corridor accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles and connects to the Sound Transit Angle Lake light rail station and park and ride.

Although all of Des Moines is adversely impacted by aircraft noise, the area between 16th Avenue S. and 24th Avenue S. is directly below the aircraft flight path and is particularly heavily impacted.

The area north of S. 216th Street was so severely affected that the Port of Seattle purchased and removed what was once a well developed single family neighborhood. This process was completed in 1993. This neighborhood buyout has left the area substantially cleared of structures. Because the Port did not expand its acquisition and removal program, the area south of S. 216th Street remains in private and City ownership.

The North Central Neighborhood contains four Subareas, each with its own distinct characteristics, opportunities, and limitations. The Subareas are shown in Figure 9-1 and described below:

- (1) **Des Moines Creek Subarea:** This Subarea includes approximately 38 acres in the northwest corner of the North Central Neighborhood. As its name implies, this area includes land within

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and adjacent to Des Moines Creek and its ravine. Also included is land north and west of the ravine that is separated from the remainder of the North Central Neighborhood by Des Moines Creek. Most of this Subarea area is heavily vegetated with native growth. A large portion of the area is publicly owned (Des Moines Creek Park) and features a pedestrian/bicycle paved trail (Des Moines Creek Trail).

- (2) **North Subarea:** This Subarea is the largest within the North Central Neighborhood, containing approximately 89 acres. It is bounded by S. 208th Street to the north, 24th Avenue S. to the east, S. 216th Street to the south, with undeveloped State Route 509 right-of-way and Des Moines Creek Park to the west. The bulk of the area contains Port-owned properties.
- (3) **South Subarea:** The South Subarea comprises approximately 55 acres and is bounded by S. 216th Street to the north, 24th Avenue S. to the east, S. 220 Street to the south, and undeveloped State Route 509 right-of-way to the west. A variety of business and recreation uses are found in this Subarea. A small cluster of single family homes on smaller lots are located in the northeast corner and a large apartment complex is located in the northwest corner.
- (4) **West Subarea:** This Subarea contains most of the undeveloped State Route 509 right-of-way and undeveloped Port property to the west of the right-of way. The area comprises of approximately 54 acres. Except for several single family homes, this area is largely undeveloped.

The North Central Neighborhood presents opportunities for developing park and recreation facilities to serve the public and future employees who work in the area.

The West Subarea is a potential resource for recreational amenities for the public and employees who use the area, and projects such as completing the connection of the Barnes Creek Trail to the Des Moines Creek Trail would be excellent enhancements.

In 2023, the City established an Innovation District Overlay in the North Central Neighborhood of Des Moines. The District is a place-based urban development strategy aimed to regenerate an under-performing area into a desirable location for innovative and creative companies and workers. The district is in place to support economic diversification, small business development, entrepreneurship, job creation, social equity, and environmental sustainability. The district can provide myriad benefits such as providing enhanced opportunities to develop workforce housing in proximity to jobs, transit, recreation, and open to complement the area and accomplish the highest and best use while simultaneously encouraging owner-occupied housing and enhancing and protecting recreational opportunities.

## GOALS

- Goal NCN 1** Catalyze economic opportunity and investment in the North Central Neighborhood by strengthening and supporting business growth and vitality as well as the creation of family wage jobs.

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- Goal NCN 2** Enhance business development opportunities within the Innovation Overlay Districts.
- Goal NCN 3** Ensure transportation and other public infrastructure and services are provided concurrent with development, as feasible.
- Goal NCN 4** Ensure compatibility between business park uses and the surrounding areas, including the Des Moines Creek basin, through careful planning and the mitigation of potential adverse environmental impacts, as permitted by law.

## POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### Land Use

**NCN 1.1 Allow business park-type land uses and recreational facilities within the North and South Subareas.**

NCN 1.1.1 Develop standards for master plan approval prior to business park development within the North Subarea.

NCN 1.1.2 Develop standards for administrative approval of development upon individual sites when such development conforms to the approved master plan.

NCN 1.1.3 Promote a mixture of high-density uses within business parks, including offices, wholesale trade, light manufacturing, research, and other related uses. Consider recreational facilities, including sport facilities with related retail uses. Promote a high-tech, research, and transit-oriented employment hub by encouraging projects that integrate workforce housing, technology-driven incubators, and transit-friendly employment centers.

**NCN 2.1 Encourage new development, infill, and redevelopment within Innovation Overlay Districts.**

NCN 2.1.1 Enable development that will complement and enhance the distinct physical characteristics of each district, support small business development and entrepreneurship, and provide the support systems such as education, training, and workforce housing.

NCN 2.1.2 Work collaboratively to increase opportunities for small business development in order to create greater efficiencies in land use and infrastructure to reduce associated costs and support multi-modal transportation options (non-motorized and bus transit).

### Transportation

**NCN 3.1 Facilitate improved vehicular access prior to or concurrent with new development.**

NCN 3.1.1 Work cooperatively with other affected agencies during the evaluation, siting, and construction of new roadway improvements.

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NCN 3.1.2 When appropriate, ensure business park developments contribute funds toward the cost of the off-site roadway improvements based on the proportionate share of future vehicle trips, or the added property value created by the roadway improvement.

NCN 3.1.3 Ensure that traffic reports identify the potential impacts to the surrounding arterial street network and the appropriate mitigating measures, as required by law.

NCN 3.1.4 Consider requirements for business park development to include transportation demand management (TDM) measures, such as bus pass subsidies, preferential parking for car and van pools, flextime, bicycle parking, and ride match services.

NCN 3.1.5 Encourage employers in the North Central Neighborhood to sponsor, co-sponsor, or provide shuttles to enhance connectivity with the Sound Transit Angle Lake Link Light Rail station and transit facilities on Pacific Highway S., as well as routes that would circulate through Des Moines to bring people to and from the Marina District. The City will advocate to King County Metro to provide such services.

NCN 3.1.6 Ensure that new development within the North Subarea is served by an internal system of public rights-of-way that minimize the impact upon surrounding arterials and residential areas, as feasible. Require that access to individual developments be exclusively served by the internal street systems, where feasible.

NCN 3.1.7 Design ingress and egress for each Subarea to minimize additional traffic on S. 216th Street, west of the North Central Neighborhood, and on 24th Avenue S., south of S. 216th Street. Limit developments that will generate excessive amounts of traffic on S. 216th Street, west of the North Central Neighborhood, or on 24th Avenue S., south of S. 216th Street, where feasible.

NCN 3.1.8 Encourage new arterial streets within or adjacent to the North Central Neighborhood so that access to internal, local-access streets within each Subarea will be from the new arterial(s).

NCN 3.1.9 Locate and design SR 509 and 24th Avenue interchanges that extend through or are adjacent to the North Central Neighborhood, as feasible, to: 1) provide direct access to and from the neighborhood; 2) alleviate existing traffic problems in the vicinity; 3) provide improved access for the greater community; and 4) ensure that it does not serve as the sole southerly access to SeaTac International Airport.

NCN 3.1.10 Prepare standards that require new developments provide for convenient pedestrian access to exterior arterials, particularly those with transit routes.

NCN 3.1.11 Prepare standards for planned street and development patterns to include relocation and undergrounding of existing utilities. Ensure that master plans include an analysis

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of all utility needs, including on and off-site improvements. At the time of development, follow required standards for the undergrounding of existing and new utility lines, including those on adjacent streets. Promote an equitable distribution of utility improvement costs among all business park developments.

NCN 3.1.12 Drainage systems should be designed consistent with the King County Surface Water Manual, the Des Moines Creek Basin Plan, the Massey Creek Flood Control Management Study, and other applicable drainage plans. Require that development maintain the existing direction of surface water flow within existing basin boundaries, where feasible. Ensure that all surface water runoff be collected and detained to prevent any off-site flooding or adverse water quality impacts. As feasible. Prepare standards for drainage systems that use biofiltration to maintain water quality and incorporate drainage features into on-site water amenities.

NCN 3.1.13 Closely regulate extensive outdoor storage areas. Develop standards for small areas for outdoor storage when the area is well screened from adjacent residential properties and public rights-of-way. Recommend or require that loading areas be oriented away from adjacent residential areas and perimeter arterials. Encourage indoor storage areas.

## **Park and Open Space**

### **NCN 4.1 Ensure that new business park uses include the development of recreational facilities.**

NCN 4.1.1 Acquire lands within Des Moines Creek Subarea, the West Subarea, and the South Subarea for development of future recreational facilities, as feasible.