Press Release

Suquamish Tribe plans new shopping center in Silverdale amid retail push

By Jessica Perez – Reporter, Puget Sound Business Journal
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A New Commercial Center Planned for Silverdale

A new commercial center could be headed for Silverdale's shopping district, just north of the Trails at Silverdale shopping center. The project, led by the Suquamish Tribe, is planned for a vacant 13-acre site owned by the tribe at Clear Creek Road Northwest and Northwest Pete Ross Way. The development comes as the tribe looks to expand its already robust business operations with new ventures in retail.

Planning is still in the early stages, with the design and budget yet to be determined, said Rion Ramirez, CEO of Port Madison Enterprises, the tribe's business arm. The goal is to develop the site within the next year or two.
Ramirez told the Business Journal that the tribe aims to create something similar to the 212,000-square-foot Trails at Silverdale—though the tribe's site is smaller. The project is envisioned to complement the CenterCal Properties-owned Trails, whose major tenants include Sprouts Farmers Market, Total Wine, and Old Navy.

Clearwater Market, the tribe's new gas and mini-mart brand, could be part of the retail mix.

"The hope is that we'll be able to bring non-Indian businesses onto the properties that we can develop—similar to some of the things other tribes have done, like at Tulalip's Quil Ceda Village," Ramirez said.

Expanding Beyond Gaming

The Silverdale development is just one of several commercial projects the tribe plans to pursue, with a focus on retail and cannabis. A compact with the State of Washington allows the tribe to split tax revenues with local municipalities, with proceeds funding government and community services.

Port Madison Enterprises, established in 1987, already operates a diverse range of businesses, including Clearwater Casino Resort, Kiana Lodge, White Horse Golf Club, and a property management division. The first Clearwater Markets opened in 2024 in Bremerton and Poulsbo. Other tribal subsidiaries focus on construction services and cannabis sales.

The tribe's current investments generate more than $250 million in annual gross economic impact in Kitsap County and nearly $300 million statewide, according to a study by Stanford University economist John B. Taylor.

Additionally, the tribe is the fifth-largest employer in Kitsap County, with 1,240 employees—78% of whom are non-tribal members. It contributes over $19 million annually in state and local taxes through its business activities.

Growth Plans for Clearwater Markets

For its Clearwater Markets brand, the tribe is targeting Silverdale, Bremerton, and Port Orchard for expansion. The Poulsbo location opened in November 2024, offering a 7,700-square-foot market with a gas station, convenience store, and cannabis outlet for Agate Dreams, another Suquamish brand.

Historically, the tribe's primary source of income came from fishing. In the 1990s, it opened Clearwater Casino, located off State Route 305 just across from Bainbridge Island. Revenue significantly increased after the introduction of gaming machines.

However, Ramirez said the tribe doesn't want to be "so heavily dependent on the boom and bust of gaming" and is seeking ways "to drive tax revenue for the tribal government, as well as to create businesses for diversification for the tribe."

Regional and Tribal Collaboration

Other local tribes are following a similar path. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians, under Chairman Bill Sterud, has expanded into industrial real estate, manufacturing, restaurants, hospitality, and tourism.

While there is some competition among tribes, Suquamish Chairman Leonard Forsman told the Business Journal that tribes generally respect boundaries.

"Sometimes a little competition is kind of good, too," Forsman said.

The Suquamish Tribe plans to continue expanding business operations on and off the Port Madison Reservation, with an emphasis on its ancestral lands in Silverdale, Bremerton, and Port Orchard. Opportunities in Seattle are also being considered. Along the way, the tribe hopes to partner with other tribal governments and municipalities.

A Strong Partnership with Poulsbo

One successful partnership has been with the City of Poulsbo. Ed Stern, deputy mayor and City Council member, highlighted joint projects at Allied Health Center and Olympic College. He noted the mutual economic benefits, especially in tourism, with Poulsbo's "Little Norway" charm and the casino's hotel and entertainment offerings.

"This is a lot more than just an economic relationship between Poulsbo and the tribe," Stern said. "We share so much economic development that's happening right now and building into the future—that's a really cool aspect."

Looking to the Future

The Suquamish Tribe sees its economic development efforts as long-term investments aimed at supporting future generations. "We want people to understand that our economic development philosophy benefits the entire region," Forsman said.