
II. VISION/Framework GOALS

A. VISION STATEMENT



Welcome to Kirkland sign

The Vision Statement is a verbal snapshot of Kirkland in the year 2022. It summarizes the desired character and characteristics of our community. It provides the ultimate goals for our community planning and development efforts.

The Vision Statement is an outgrowth of a community visioning process that occurred in 1992 and then again in 2002. The process in 1992 involved a series of community workshops in which approximately 250 Kirkland citizens worked to articulate commonly held desires for the Kirkland of the future. In 2002, the City sponsored an outreach program called “Community Conversations – Kirkland 2022.” The program centered around a video produced by the City about Kirkland’s past, present and future with three questions focusing on a preferred future vision. Nearly 1,000 people participated in one of the 51 conversations held by a wide range of groups in the community to discuss their preferred future in 20 years. In addition, individuals participated by viewing the video program on the City’s cable channel or on the City’s Internet web site and responding to the questions by mail or e-mail to the City. The responses from all three formats were summarized into major themes reflecting commonly held desires and formed

the basis for the Vision Statement. The community visioning program was awarded the Puget Sound Regional Council’s 2020 Vision Award for its high level of innovation, creativity and success.

The Vision Statement is intended to set a direction instead of being a mere prediction. Rather than describing the features of Kirkland as we think they are likely to be, it expresses what we would like our community to become and believe we can achieve. It acknowledges past and current trends and Kirkland’s relationship to external factors, but also assumes an ability to shape the future in a positive way. The Vision Statement, therefore, is optimistic, affirming and enhancing the best of our attributes, past and existing, and aspiring for those we hope to have.

A VISION FOR KIRKLAND

Kirkland in 2022 is an attractive, vibrant, and inviting place to live, work and visit. Our lakefront community, with its long shoreline, provides views and access to the lake and is a destination place for residents and visitors. Kirkland is a community with a small-town feel, retaining its sense of history while adjusting gracefully to changes in the twenty-first century.

The City is a place where people are friendly and helpful, ideas are respected and action is taken based on collaborative decisions. We have a diverse population made up of various income and age groups from various ethnic and educational backgrounds. We are committed to developing and strengthening a healthy community by creating programs that assist those in need, encourage individual expressions, provide enrichment opportunities for an increasingly diverse population, and promote healthy lifestyles. High quality local schools are important to us. Our neighborhood, business, and civic associations; our faith-based groups; and our school organizations have strong citizen involvement.

Our neighborhoods are secure, stable and well-maintained, creating the foundation for our high quality of life. Each neighborhood has its own character which is a community asset. People from all economic, age, and ethnic groups live here in a variety of housing

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types. Our residential areas are well-maintained with single-family and multifamily homes and include traditional subdivisions, waterfront-oriented neighborhoods, urban villages and an equestrian community. We have worked to increase diversity and affordability, such as smaller homes on smaller lots, compact developments and accessory housing units. Mixed land uses in neighborhoods help to minimize driving. Many of our apartments and condominiums are close to commercial areas and transportation hubs.

Kirkland's economy is strong and diverse. A healthy mix of businesses provides valuable economic returns including varied employment opportunities and high wages, a strong tax base with sustainable revenues that help fund public services, and a broad range of goods and services. Our business districts are attractive, distinctive and integral to the fabric of the City. Many serve as community gathering places and centers of cultural activity. Businesses choose to locate in Kirkland because of our innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and because they are regarded as valued members of the community.

Downtown Kirkland is a vibrant focal point of our hometown with a rich mix of commercial, residential, civic, and cultural activities in a unique waterfront location. Our Downtown maintains a human scale through carefully planned pedestrian and transit-oriented development. Many residents and visitors come to enjoy our parks, festivals, open markets and community events.

Totem Lake Urban Center is an economic and employment center with a wide range of retail, office, industrial and light manufacturing uses as well as a regional medical center surrounded by related services. It is a compact mixed-use urban village with extensive pedestrian- and transit-oriented amenities, higher intensity residential development, public gathering places and cultural activities.

We accommodate growth and change while maintaining strong linkages with our past. Important historic landmarks are preserved, and new development occurs in a manner that is compatible with and respectful of its historic context.

Our transportation system offers a variety of ways to meet our mobility needs and provides efficient and convenient access to all areas of Kirkland and regional centers. Improved transit service and facilities allow us to commute within Kirkland and to other regional destinations without overburdening our neighborhood streets. The City is pedestrian-friendly. Paths for safe pedestrian, bicycle and other transportation modes interconnect all parts of the City. In addition to the transportation functions they provide, our streets and paths are people-friendly and provide public spaces where people socialize.

The City has excellent police and fire protection, dependable water and sewer service, and well-maintained public facilities. Emergency preparedness for natural or manmade disasters is a high priority. We work closely with other jurisdictions on regional issues that affect our community. For recreation, we like to bike or walk to one of our many parks. We have well-maintained playgrounds, play fields, sport courts, indoor facilities and trails in or near each neighborhood. Our recreational programs offer a variety of year-round activities for all ages. Public access to our waterfront is provided by an unparalleled and still-expanding system of parks, trails, and vistas.

We preserve an open space network of wetlands, stream corridors, and wooded hillsides. These natural systems provide habitat for fish and wildlife and serve important biological, hydrological and geological functions. Streets are lined with a variety of trees, and vegetation is abundant throughout the City. The water and air are clean. We consider community stewardship of the environment to be very important.

Kirkland in 2022 is a delightful place to call home.

B. VISION/Framework GOALS

INTRODUCTION

The Framework Goals express the fundamental principles for guiding growth and development in Kirkland over the 20-year horizon of the Comprehensive Plan. They are based on and provide an extension of

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the aspirations and values embodied in the Vision Statement. By nature they are forward-looking and future-oriented. Even so, they were developed with a keen awareness of Kirkland's history and a strong appreciation for the high quality of life which that history has given us. The Framework Goals address a wide range of topics and form the foundation for the goals and policies contained in other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Although all of the Framework Goals broadly apply to all Comprehensive Plan elements, some of the Framework Goals are more applicable to some elements than others. Each element identifies the Framework Goals that are particularly relevant to that element.



Public art in Downtown Kirkland

All Framework Goals are intended to be achievable. They are not prioritized to give importance to some goals over others. Tradeoffs among goals will be necessary as they are applied to particular circumstances; but over time, it is intended that an appropriate balance will be achieved.

FG-1: Maintain and enhance Kirkland's unique character.

Discussion: To those who come to Kirkland to live, work, shop, or play, Kirkland is a unique and special place. Each of the City's neighborhoods and business districts has its own distinctive identity. A prime goal is to protect and improve those qualities that make our neighborhoods and our business districts so attractive. Some of the important characteristics are a small-town feel; strong sense of place; waterfront orienta-

tion; long shoreline with public views and access; pedestrian- and transit-friendly business districts; a human-scale downtown; a thriving urban center, numerous and diverse parks; neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, styles, and ages; abundant open space; historic structures; and a network of bike and pedestrian paths. The Comprehensive Plan must seek to support these and any other features which significantly contribute to the City's desired character.

FG-2: Support a strong sense of community.

Discussion: Kirkland is far more than a product of its physical features. We have a strong sense of community supported by friendly and helpful people, a network of neighborhood, business, homeowners and civic associations, good schools and recreational opportunities. A wide range of human services and enrichment opportunities are available to encourage a stable and healthy community. New ideas are respected and shared to improve the quality of life in Kirkland and the region. Parks, outdoor markets, festivals, community events and neighborhood retail districts foster good will and provide an opportunity for people to mingle and converse. Continued support of these attributes is important.

FG-3: Maintain vibrant and stable residential neighborhoods and mixed-use development, with housing for diverse income groups, age groups, and lifestyles.

Discussion: Maintaining vibrant and safe neighborhoods as desirable places to live is a high priority. Part of the appeal of existing neighborhoods is their diversity, in terms of housing types, size, style, history, maturity, and affordability. An essential part of this diversity is maintaining the integrity of existing single-family neighborhoods. We have experienced changes in the composition of our population. These changes include an aging population, smaller households, racial and ethnic diversity and a broader range of household income. At the same time, Kirkland has experienced rising housing costs, making it increasingly difficult to provide low- and moderate-cost housing. To meet the needs of Kirkland's changing population, we

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must encourage creative approaches to providing suitable housing by establishing varied and flexible development standards and initiating programs which maintain or create housing to meet specific needs. Mixed-use and transit-oriented neighborhood retail are encouraged and integrated with our neighborhoods.

FG-4: Promote a strong and diverse economy.



Carillon Point public access areas

Discussion: Kirkland's economy provides a variety of employment opportunities, a broad range of goods and services, and a strong tax base. We are fortunate to have a diversity of successful business sectors, including retail services, offices, industrial and high technology companies, medical and educational institutions, and home-based businesses. A large number of creative and innovative entrepreneurs are attracted to Kirkland by our many cultural, recreational and civic activities and our beautiful setting.

Numerous commercial districts offer distinctive business locations. Our historic Downtown is an attractive lakeside pedestrian-oriented district. Our largest commercial area, Totem Lake, is a vibrant regional retail and employment center. Other significant business nodes are located in Rose Hill, Juanita, Houghton, Yarrow Bay and Bridle Trails. These districts are integrated into the fabric of the community in a manner that respects and complements the character of our neighborhoods and the quality of the natural environment.

To protect and strengthen our economy, public and private interests must work together to create a climate that allows existing businesses to prosper and attract new businesses compatible with Kirkland's economic goals and character.

FG-5: Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a healthy environment.

Discussion: In addition to Lake Washington, Kirkland contains a variety of natural features which, through a mixture of circumstance and conscious action, have been preserved in a natural state. Features such as wetlands, streams and smaller lakes play an important role in maintaining water quality, preventing floods, and providing wildlife habitat. Vegetation preservation throughout the City, particularly on steep hillsides, helps provide soil stability and oxygen to our ecosystem and prevent erosion. Apart from their biological, hydrological, or geological functions, natural areas also make a significant contribution to Kirkland's unique identity. They provide visual linkages with the natural environment, accentuate natural topography, define neighborhood and district boundaries, and provide visual relief to the built environment.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere helps stabilize the climate. Maintaining clean air and water and reducing greenhouse gas emissions provide the community with a healthy environment. Efforts to maintain significant sensitive areas, natural features, the urban forest and vegetation, clean air and water through active community stewardship, and to curtail climate change as a result of global warming, are critical to our quality of life.

FG-6: Identify, protect and preserve the City's historic resources, and enhance the identity of those areas and neighborhoods in which they exist.

Discussion: Kirkland is fortunate to have a richness and quality based on its long and colorful history. The numerous historic buildings, sites and neighborhoods

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reflect various stages of the City's development. These resources provide evidence of the community's historical continuity, and contribute to Kirkland's identity. They are important visible reminders of where we have been and they deserve active protection and enhancement.

FG-7: Encourage a sustainable community.

Discussion: As Kirkland develops and rebuilds, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to create a sustainable community that balances urban growth with resource protection. A sustainable society meets the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations and other species to meet their own needs. Kirkland strives to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns in planning for sustainability. A sustainable economy provides a good quality of life for all residents without undermining the biological and physical processes of the environment upon which people depend, nor reducing the community's ability to ensure that the basic human needs of all its members are met.

We safeguard the quality of life for current and future generations and create a healthier and more environmentally sensitive community by implementing sustainable management practices. We strive to accomplish our goal by reducing our contribution to climate change, by minimizing human impacts on local ecosystems and by supporting a stable and diverse economy.

The City takes a comprehensive, coordinated approach to natural resource management and uses a variety of tools to foster sustainable practices and principles, including public involvement and education, incentives, regulations, and enforcement. Among the varied tools are land use goals and regulations that encourage pedestrian-oriented and compact development in our neighborhoods, transportation planning which seeks to develop a multimodal transportation system, regulations protecting the quality of the air, water, land and other natural resources, land acquisition and projects to restore our natural systems, solid waste reduction programs, energy and water conservation programs, procurement practices

emphasizing nontoxic and recycled materials and products, green business recruitment and recognition, utilization of green building practices and LID strategies, and public education.

FG-8: Maintain and enhance Kirkland's strong physical, visual, and perceptual linkages to Lake Washington.

Discussion: Kirkland's history, identity and character are strongly associated with its proximity and orientation to Lake Washington. The City is famous for its system of waterfront parks, which provide a broad range of passive and active recreational activities and environmental protection. Complementing the parks is a system of shoreline trails that has been installed as lakefront properties develop or redevelop. West-facing slopes have afforded lake and territorial views from public spaces within many neighborhoods. Downtown Kirkland strongly benefits from its adjacency to Moss Bay. Linkages to the lake in the Juanita and Yarrow Bay business districts are limited with existing development blocking most of the shoreline. Opportunities should be pursued to increase public access to the lake in these districts. Maintaining and improving these linkages to the lake, requiring paths to complete the shoreline trail system and continuing to obtain waterfront parks where feasible are important.



Lake Washington

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FG-9: *Provide safety and accessibility for those who use alternative modes of transportation within and between neighborhoods, public spaces, and business districts and to regional facilities.*

Discussion: An important part of Kirkland's existing character is its safety and accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and alternative modes of transportation. Such alternatives provide an opportunity for daily exercise which promotes a healthy lifestyle and results in a reduction in vehicle emissions and cleaner air. To meet this goal, we need a completely connected system of pathways for pedestrians, bicyclists and alternative mode users that is safe and convenient. Such pathways can take a variety of forms, ranging from concrete sidewalks, bike lanes, and bridges to unimproved trails. The need for pedestrian pathways and bike lanes is especially important to the most common destinations, such as schools, parks, public buildings, transportation, and business districts. Also important in fostering pedestrian and bike accessibility are land use patterns, site designs, and building designs which encourage and facilitate access for pedestrians, bicyclists and other users. The paths should also be designed to provide public spaces where people socialize and should connect to the regional pedestrian and bicycle trail systems.

FG-10: *Create a transportation system which allows the mobility of people and goods by providing a variety of transportation options.*

Discussion: The increase in employment, housing and total population both within Kirkland and throughout the region has increased the use of our roads. Historically, there is also a dependence on car ownership and the number of miles most people drive alone each week. At the same time, road building has been slowed because of insufficient funds, an unwillingness to disrupt established neighborhoods, and doubts about the effectiveness of road building to solve congestion.

There will be no single or simple solution to the congestion problems that decrease our mobility. Greater emphasis than in the past is placed on providing viable alternatives to driving, or at least driving alone. Although some road widening may be necessary, mobility options should include better transit, more car pooling, greater pedestrian, bicycle and other modes of mobility, better street connections, and land use strategies which reduce the need to drive, such as mixing uses and locating shops and services close to home. In addition, because Kirkland's transportation system is but a small part of a complex regional network, it is necessary for our transportation planning to be closely coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions and regional plans.

The street system and transit centers provide an opportunity to add to our sense of community. These facilities should be people-friendly and provide public spaces where people socialize.

FG-11: *Maintain existing park facilities, while seeking opportunities to expand and enhance the current range of facilities and recreational programs.*



Marina Park in Downtown Kirkland

Discussion: Kirkland is regionally known for its outstanding park system. Kirkland's parks also provide a prominent source of community identity and pride. The City is perhaps best known for its extensive and diverse system of lakefront parks. In addition, Kirk-

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land has a rich variety of well-maintained parks, including neighborhood playgrounds, ballfields, tennis, basketball and skate courts, walking trails, natural and landscaped open spaces, an outdoor swimming pool, indoor community centers, and senior citizen and youth centers. Recreational programs offer year-round, low cost or free activities for all age groups. It has been a long-standing City policy that the range and quality of park facilities and programs now available to Kirkland residents keep pace with future population growth. To ensure wise use of available resources, planning for future park facilities must be coordinated with other public and private providers of recreation services. Where possible, multiple use of public facilities, such as City-school park partnerships, should be sought. At a minimum, park facilities should be maintained close to current levels of service. Because of the importance of parks in defining Kirkland's character and promoting a healthy community, the City also should continue to explore ways to enhance the park system beyond the needs generated by new growth, including additional funding sources such as grants, special property tax levies or impact fees.

FG-12: Ensure public safety.

Discussion: Police and fire protection are essential to the community's quality of life. Prompt response times with appropriate resources are critical. The City-operated municipal court is convenient and cost-effective. The City also has a central role in emergency preparedness and responding to natural and manmade disasters. Plans should be in place and well-coordinated with local hospitals, schools, communication systems and other jurisdictions.

FG-13: Maintain existing adopted levels of service for important public facilities.

Discussion: Facilities and services for transportation, police and fire protection, water supply, sanitary sewer, and surface water control are essential for the day-to-day functioning of the City. The levels of service now provided by these facilities are generally satisfactory. Maintaining the adopted level for these

services as growth occurs is a high priority, and construction of required capital facilities must be phased accordingly. Similarly, some localized deficiencies exist in the sanitary sewer and water supply systems that will require correction. Where possible, we should continue to improve all of these facilities and services above the minimum adopted level of service to preserve our quality of life and the environment. The City should also explore additional ways to fund needed improvements, such as through grants, special property tax levies and/or impact fees. In planning for public facilities, the interrelationship of Kirkland's facilities to regional systems must be recognized.

FG-14: Plan for a fair share of regional growth, consistent with State and regional goals to minimize low-density sprawl and direct growth to urban areas.

Discussion: Although Kirkland is a unique and special place, it is not isolated. Kirkland is part of a large and growing metropolitan area. Regional planning policies seek to direct growth to existing and emerging urban areas within the metropolitan region. Consequently, Kirkland must accommodate a fair share of such growth. To do so, development in Kirkland must use land efficiently. Fortunately, Kirkland's development pattern is already well established and has accommodated compact developments at many locations. Accepting a fair share of regional growth, therefore, will not require fundamental shifts in the City's overall pattern or character of development. Even so, careful attention must be paid to ensure that growth is accommodated in a manner that complements rather than detracts from Kirkland's unique character while being consistent with State and regional goals to minimize low-density sprawl and direct growth to urban areas.

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FG-15: Solve regional problems that affect Kirkland through regional coordination and partnerships.

Discussion: Many challenges facing Kirkland and other local communities may only be solved through regional planning, funding and action. Transportation, affordable housing, employment, climate change, and natural resource management are just a few of the issues that need regional coordination. A city-by-city approach often results in impacts on neighboring communities. Interlocal cooperation, consistent standards and regulations between jurisdictions, and regional planning and implementation are important to solving these regional issues.

FG-16: Promote active citizen involvement and outreach education in development decisions and planning for Kirkland's future.

Discussion: Kirkland's future will be determined by a myriad of independent actions taken by individuals and groups who live, work, shop, and play here. Planning for the future offers the opportunity for all community members to cooperatively identify a vision for the City's future and to coordinate their actions in achieving that vision. If such planning is to have meaning, however, a broad base of credibility and responsibility must be established. To ensure that this occurs, the City should actively encourage community participation from all sectors of the City in the ongoing preparation and amendment of plans and implementing actions. This involvement should also include community outreach educational programs to inform and solicit ideas. For development decisions, the City should actively encourage collaboration and consensus with the community, stakeholders and developers to assure predictable and timely results.

FG-17: Establish development regulations that are fair and predictable.

Discussion: Achieving the desired future for Kirkland will depend on actions undertaken by both governmental agencies and private property owners. To

ensure that public and private actions support the Comprehensive Plan and are consistent with public health, safety, and welfare, governmental regulation of development will continue to be necessary. Such regulation, however, must fairly balance public interests with private property rights. It is important also that regulations be clearly written to assure predictable results, fair and cost-effective, and that they be administered expeditiously to avoid undue delay.