



Neighborhood Connections Program
Central Houghton Neighborhood Association
Submitted Project Proposals
Final Action Plan: 2008



Parks

1. Carillon Woods Parks

- a. Create a wildlife habitat demonstration garden in Carillon Woods Park.

Response: *Through the National Wildlife Federation Carillon Woods is recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Certified habitat areas contain the basics for wildlife. Food and water sources, cover, and places to raise their young. These areas are also maintained utilizing a sustainable approach to landscape. Additional native plantings that could benefit wildlife could be planted within Carillon Woods. Parks & Community Services would be open to discussing this opportunity with the Neighborhood. This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.*

- b. Install portable toilet at Carillon Woods.

Response: *Through the Master Plan process a portable toilet was not within the program elements. Restroom opportunities within parks are a desirable component and it is possible that through the Neighborhood Connection program a suitable surround for the portable could be built and or purchased. In addition to the possible visual impacts to the Neighborhood is the on-going resources needed to maintain the portable toilet. Yearly cost runs between \$2,500–\$3,000.*

- c. Trim trees around children's play area at Carillon Woods.

Response: *All the trees in and around the pathways and play areas of Carillon Woods were evaluated prior to the Parks opening. Parks & Community services would be more than willing to re-evaluate any trees of concern and or address any encroaching vegetation.*

- d. Install path lighting at Carillon Woods.

Response: *Currently no utilities are available at Carillon Woods. Depending upon the scope of lighting such a project could exceed the Neighborhood Connection funding. Additionally with the natural type of setting Carillon Woods affords adding lighting might not be to desirable for the neighbors in close proximity to the park. Lighting was not one of the program elements of the master plan process with the neighborhood.*

2. Community School Site

- a. Install a rope climbing structure at Community School campus.

Response: *This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.*

3. Houghton Beach Park

- a. Install new playground equipment at Houghton Beach.

Response: *We do have Houghton Beach Park play equipment identified within our Capital Improvement Projects for replacement and look forward to working with the Community in choosing a suitable replacement.*

4. Lakeview Elementary School

- a. Plant grass on playfield at Lakeview Elementary School.

Response: Through the City / School partnership the City does maintain this field for LWSD (Lake Washington School District). Believe it or not because of the fields (“all-weather mix” – sand & clay mixture) it is one of our most requested fields we maintain. The various user groups (Kirkland American Little League & Lake Washington Youth Soccer) being the primary users of the field actually love the field because of it’s playability during wet weather. There is another “all weather” field the City maintains at Mark Twain Elementary and users like it as well. It is nice for the City, LWSD, and the various user groups to have a mixture of fields to offer. Here in the Northwest with our wet Springs and Falls it’s nice to know not all the fields will be unplayable on bad weather days. When it gets really saturated the grass fields can become real mushy and unplayable fairly quickly. Additionally, the costs of maintaining a natural grass field vs. an “all weather” field are significantly different. All weather fields take regular dragging / leveling and the periodic watering to control dust. Grass fields take regular mowing, watering, fertilizations, top dressing, core aerification, seeding, and turf repair. We can maintain one acre of “all weather” for about \$5,000–\$6,000 a year. That same one acre can cost \$25,000 - \$30,000+ a year if it’s a natural grass field.

5. Phyllis Needy Park

- a. Install new playground equipment at Phyllis Needy Park.

Response: Phyllis Needy Houghton Neighborhood Parks received new play equipment in the summer of 2006. We are hoping the investment in new components will last 10–12 years.

6. Terrace Park

- a. Find appropriate spot for Hought-down shed in Terrace Park.

Response: This request has been made in the past and is a challenging one for us. We would prefer to not have structures placed throughout the parks system. They tend to attract graffiti and vandalism and without on-going care can become a visual impact to the park site.

7. Watershed Park

- a. Develop Watershed Park into a first-class park.

Response: Though Watershed Park has significant potential for upside improvements some would say that it is a first class park. A lot of neighbors tell us they like it just the way it is and do not mess it up with added improvements. We do have an unfunded project within our CIP to do a Master Plan process for Watershed park but it has never garnered the winning points with all of the other competing projects.

- b. Improve walking conditions at Watershed Park.

Response: Some of the inclines and surface spots in various places could be improved upon. We do get the occasional Eagle Scout looking for a project and this might be a perfect situation for one of those opportunities. Either way we would be open to working with the Neighborhood to improve walking conditions. This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City’s website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.

- c. Trash can at the end of 114th Ave NE at Watershed Park entrance.

Response: This is something we can provide.

Pedestrian Improvements/Safety

8. Flashing crosswalk on 108th in vicinity of Firestation 22.

Response: *Because of the high cost of installing and maintaining in-pavement crosswalk lights, the City of Kirkland has been looking for alternatives that will provide similar warnings to motorists that there are pedestrians in the crosswalk. Over the next few months we'll be installing and evaluating pedestrian crossing signs that have flashing LEDs on them that come on when pedestrians actuate the crossing button. These are being used in other cities, are much less costly, and look like they will provide similar visibility. That said, no technology will completely protect a pedestrian in the street from a motorist who isn't paying attention. Much of our public outreach is aimed at motorists reminding them to look for pedestrians and yield to them – but we also work on educating pedestrians on the importance of protecting themselves. Our hope is that the combination of education and warning devices will provide the greatest degree of safety.*

Also, because of the driveways and the characteristics of the street, marking a crosswalk at this location is not something we expect would improve pedestrian safety. Marked crosswalks are carefully managed to comply with federal standards. As such, they are not good candidates for Neigh Connections funds.

9. Install crosswalk on 53rd near 111th Place or 110th.

Response: *We can evaluate this location for a possible marked crosswalk, as we observe federal standards in the decision. This is not a good candidate for Neigh Connections funds.*

10. More benches, crosswalks, and walkway connections.

Response: *Benches are good candidates for Neighborhood Connection funds, but we need to know specific locations to make sure there is room. Crosswalks are not good candidates for NC funds because of closely they are managed to comply with federal standards. Walkway connections that are not paved may be good candidates (paving is extremely expensive), but we need to know specific locations where they are desired. This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.*

11. More blinking crosswalk lights.

Response: *Because of the high cost of installing and maintaining in-pavement crosswalk lights, the City of Kirkland has been looking for alternatives that will provide similar warnings to motorists that there are pedestrians in the crosswalk. Over the next few months we'll be installing and evaluating pedestrian crossing signs that have flashing LEDs on them that come on when pedestrians actuate the crossing button. These are being used in other cities, are much less costly, and look like they will provide similar visibility. That said, no technology will completely protect a pedestrian in the street from a motorist who isn't paying attention. Much of our public outreach is aimed at motorists reminding them to look for pedestrians and yield to them – but we also work on educating pedestrians on the importance of protecting themselves. Our hope is that the combination of education and warning devices will provide the greatest degree of safety.*

12. Improve walking conditions at NE 60th Street going west across railroad tracks.

Response: *The improvements you have suggested are actually identified in the draft of our updated Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Ideally, we would get this connection improved as part of the trail development after trains have stopped running on the corridor. Until then, my understanding is BNSF will not support improvements that encourage pedestrians to cross the tracks. Right now we expect BNSF will cease railroad operations along this corridor early next year. King County will take over ownership of the right-of-way and we will work with them on trail access and development issues. Since this connection is in our plan, it will be part of that. There's no guarantee of funding at this point, but we'll take it one step at a time.*

13. Improve pedestrian safety crossing NE 68th Street at 108th Avenue NE (southeast corner to northeast corner).

Response: *This is a driver education/enforcement issue. Once we've fully signalized an intersection with marked crosswalks and pedestrian crossing heads, there isn't much else we can do to safeguard pedestrians. As always, pedestrians need to be careful to protect themselves from inattentive motorists, and making eye contact with the driver before stepping in front of a car is the best way to do that.*

14. Install sidewalk on eastside of 112th Avenue NE from 65th to 72nd Street.

Response: *The City prepares its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for a six-year period. We evaluated candidate projects for inclusion in the CIP using a fairly exhaustive process that prioritizes the candidates using a pretty wide range of criteria. If you'd like more information on that, here's a link that describes that process:*

http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/Public_Works/Transportation_Streets/Transportation_Project_Evaluation.htm

Our existing CIP includes a lot of work. Unfortunately a sidewalk along 112th NE is not included. However, as we make progress against existing needs, it may get consideration in future years. This request has been forwarded to our Capital Program manager for possible consideration as the CIP evolves. We do not expect to be able to afford it any time soon.

15. Install continuous sidewalk from Houghton Market to the Post Office on 6th Street S.

Response: *Kirkland's Capital Improvement Program includes a short sidewalk project on 6th St slightly to the north and south of Kirkland Avenue, which should help. Sidewalks are extremely expensive projects – about \$600 per lineal foot (including sidewalk, curb, gutter, and drainage). So 100 feet of sidewalk is about \$60,000. These are likely out of reach for Neighborhood Connections projects.*

16. Install sidewalk along 108th Avenue south of Phyllis Needy Park (west side).

Response: *The City prepares its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for a six-year period. We evaluated candidate projects for inclusion in the CIP using a fairly exhaustive process that prioritizes the candidates using a pretty wide range of criteria. If you'd like more information on that, here's a link that describes that process:*

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Traffic Improvements/Neighborhood Traffic Control

17. Realign street on NE 62nd Street between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE.

Response: *The roadway meanders around a bit and is somewhat narrow, especially along the section of sidewalk that has been built. I think what you've suggested would improve the street for motorists. Unfortunately it's beyond our ability to fund. It is usually adjacent development that pays for the improvements to streets like this, though that is obviously a longer-term solution. The kind of project you've requested would be a fairly significant capital improvement project. I've checked our Capital Improvement Program plan for the next six years and it does not include NE 62nd street. This is particularly significant because many of the projects identified in that plan are not funded, and these would be likely to occupy any available new money before new projects. As you can imagine, we try to focus our limited dollars on the streets that will provide the greatest public benefit, which usually means arterial streets. Those also improve our ability to leverage local funds with outside grants to provide still more benefit. On the plus side, many of the streets with the greatest traffic safety problems are wide and straight. Narrower, windy streets like NE 62nd tend to have significantly lower speeds and that can be a real plus in residential neighborhoods. Those lower speeds can help offset the problems you mentioned.*

18. Create clear and wider bike lanes on 108th Avenue NE.

Response: *The City does a good job of keeping it's transportation system in good shape and there is room for improvement. Our main problem right now is that improvement costs money. Much of our effort in preparing our budget for the next two years is prioritizing and preserving existing service levels. Doing more street sweeping and widening existing sidewalks are unaffordable in our current economic situation. Whenever we stripe bike lanes, we make them as wide as we can while still balancing that against competing needs. But we do continue to work on expanding the bike lane network.*

19. Add traffic circles and beautify existing islands on 108th Avenue NE.

Response: *The City is not able to take on additional planting or maintenance efforts at this time. 108th Avenue NE is a fairly high-volume arterial street and from a safety standpoint is not a good location to have volunteers performing either installation or maintenance work. Because 108th Avenue NE is a primary emergency response route, we would discourage the installation of new traffic circles. This may be a good proposal to revisit when the City's finances are significantly improved, but at this time, it is not a good Neighborhood Connections project.*

20. Install traffic light at NE 53rd Street and 108th Avenue NE.

Response: *Intersections must meet federal standards to be eligible for traffic signals. Once they meet the necessary criteria, they go into the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). A typical traffic signal can cost on the order of \$100,000. This is not currently in the City's CIP. Because of the cost and the degree to which they are regulated, traffic signals are not good candidates for Neighborhood Connections projects.*

21. Clear sidewalks of brush (both sides of 108th Avenue NE between NE 65th Street and NE 45th Street).

Response: *Contacted requestor asking for exact locations where problem exists (ideally by address), Once locations are determined, letters will be mailed to adjacent property owners asking them to trim the vegetation back to the edge of the sidewalk. This is the responsibility of the adjacent property owners.*

22. Paint curb red at NE 47th Street near Phyllis Needy Park.

Response: *Funding reductions have curtailed the City's ability to paint curbs red except for serious safety/access issues. We have, however, developed a program that authorizes residents to paint specific curbing red with paint they have purchased themselves. We are currently exploring the possibility of a volunteer group helping those who do not have the capacity to paint the curbs themselves.*

23. Neighborhood Traffic Control needed on 106th Avenue NE and NE 55th Street.

Response: *A speed study was conducted there about three years ago which found that the speeds are about what we would expect on a street with a 25mph speed limit. This is not to say that there aren't speeding cars on it – you've seen them. What the study indicates is that most of the drivers (85%) are operating pretty close to the speed limit. There have been a lot of studies on the use of stop signs to slow traffic and the general conclusion is that they simply don't work. In many cases they have the reverse effect. Motorists can quickly tell when a sign has been installed to slow them down rather than protect them, and often will roll through the stop sign and then make up the lost time by traveling faster on the following block. The studies show that also has the unfortunate side-effect of reducing overall compliance with stop signs which is something we very much want to avoid. This has resulted in the adoption of national standards for the installation of stop signs, and we comply with those. We do have a neighborhood speed watch program that might be effective in this case. Most of the motorists on 106th are likely to be repeat drivers from day to day. Under the speed watch program, the Police Department trains a neighborhood volunteer in the use of a radar gun and checks one out to them. The volunteer runs radar speed checks and writes down the license numbers of speeding vehicles. The Police Department then sends the registered owners letters alerting them to the problem and reminding them to observe the speed limit. In areas where it's mostly the same drivers every day, this can be pretty effective.*

Street Lights

24. Add street light on NE 60th Street between 108th and 106th Avenue NE.

Response: An e-mail has been sent to the requestor asking for the pole #(s) for the desired location of the streetlight, as well as assurance that the residents nearby do not object to it (same as other streetlight requests). This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.

25. Add street light at Metro bus stop on 108th Avenue NE and NE 60th Street.

Response: An e-mail has been sent to the requestor asking for the pole #(s) for the desired location of the streetlight, as well as assurance that the residents nearby do not object to it (same as other streetlight requests). This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.

26. Replace street lights with dark sky lighting fixtures at 108th Avenue NE and NE 47th Street (north of the corner opposite Phyllis Needy Park).

Response: An e-mail has been sent to the requestor asking for the pole #(s) for the desired location of the streetlight, as well as assurance that the residents nearby do not object to it (same as other streetlight requests). This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.

27. Add street lights within Sandhurst Neighborhood.

Response: An e-mail has been sent to the requestor asking for the pole #(s) for the desired location of the streetlight, as well as assurance that the residents nearby do not object to it (same as other streetlight requests). This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.

28. Add street light at 110th Avenue NE and NE 65th Street.

Response: An e-mail has been sent to the requestor asking for the pole #(s) for the desired location of the streetlight, as well as assurance that the residents nearby do not object to it (same as other streetlight requests).

29. Install street light on north corner of Carillon Woods Park running down 55th Street.

Response: An e-mail has been sent to the requestor asking for the pole #(s) for the desired location of the streetlight, as well as assurance that the residents nearby do not object to it (same as other streetlight requests). This project qualified as a potential Neighborhood Connection project. See final project voting results on the City's website at www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/neighborhoods.

Miscellaneous

30. Purchase land south of Houghton Market for natural park with small lake in the middle for looping natural walkways.

Response: Purchase is beyond the scope of Neighborhood Connection funding and current City resources.

31. Put recycling receptacles along with trash receptacles in neighborhood parks.

Response: We do have garbage receptacles at neighborhood parks and we have tried recycling at various park sites over the years but the challenge has always been the contamination making it inefficient.

32. Investigate why neighbors are unable to use Best Gym.

Response: *Neighbors should contact school principal directly – Jane Andrew (425) 828-3289*

33. Suspend Neighborhood Connections to meet budget shortfall.

Response: *The Neighborhood Connection Program funding was cut from \$250,000 to \$25,000 in the 2009/2010 biannual budget.*

34. Stimulate better commerce at Houghton Shopping Center.

Response: *Referred to the Economic Development Manager.*

35. Put recycling receptacles along with trash receptacles at bus stops.

Response: *Referred to waste management for future consideration.*

36. Emergency Preparedness Fair in Central Houghton.

Response: *Referred to Neighborhood Association as potential Neighborhood Matching Grant Project.*