HOW DO WE MEASURE BALANCED TRANSPORTATION?

On November 17, 2015 City Council adopted the City of Kirkland Transportation Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan established goals, policies, and actions for how the City will expand and maintain a multi-modal transportation system in support of the Comprehensive Plan vision of a livable, walkable, green and connected community. One of the eight goals in the Transportation Master Plan is to “[m]easure and report on progress toward achieving goals and completing actions.” The plan provides policy support to implement a multi-modal, plan-based concurrency system, establishes acceptable levels of service for all modes, adopts a modal split goal for the Totem Lake Urban Center, and ensures Transportation Master Plan implementation by monitoring progress on goals.
The City began several ambitious active transportation (bicycle and pedestrian) projects in 2014 which have now entered the construction phase. The City is working diligently to meet the construction targets set for these projects. We are continuing to coordinate with our regional partners, work with the community to mitigate project impacts, and pursue funding to better meet our targets.

We are continuing to work on projects that incorporate safety features that are designed to reduce the incidence of automobile collisions involving bikes and pedestrians. The level of collisions fluctuates from year to year, and staff will analyze all information available to see what can be done to reduce their frequency. Staff is confident that as the City continues to move forward on several initiatives, including the Vision Zero, Safer Routes to School Program, Neighborhood Safety Program, Neighborhood Traffic Control Program, and the Streetlight Program, the City’s transportation system will become safer for users of all modes of transportation.

Community Connections

Community Connections is a King County Metro program that works with local governments and community partners to develop an array of innovative and cost-effective transportation solutions in areas of King County that do not have the infrastructure, density, or land use to support a regular, fixed-route bus service. The Juanita and Finn Hill neighborhoods of Kirkland were selected to implement the following programs: TripPool, SchoolPool, and Community Van. TripPool offers on-demand ridesharing between residences and transit centers. SchoolPool partners with schools, PTAs, parents, and students to encourage alternative ways to get to and from school other than driving. Community Van utilizes King County Metro vans for local group trips designed to provide residents with customized rideshare options. Volunteer drivers offer shared rides to popular destinations and events.

Forbes Creek Advanced Mitigation Site.

The City of Kirkland staff first discussed the idea of “advanced mitigation” with the City Council in late 2016 during the review and adoption of Chapter 90 of the Zoning Code, “Critical Areas”. Advanced Mitigation means combining environmental mitigation requirements into a larger project at specific sites in the City that would provide a greater environmental benefit in a more cost-effective manner. Staff returned to Council in 2018 on three occasions discussing 1) framework and criteria of such a program, 2) scope and budget request, and 3) a responsive bid to construct the City’s first advance mitigation project: Advanced Mitigation at Forbes Creek Drive. Construction began in late 2018 restoring more than five acres of wetlands near Fire Station 21 – on the northeast side of Market Street’s intersection with Forbes Creek Drive. The City’s contractor removed invasive Himalayan Blackberry and reed canary grass monocultures that consumed the area, and hand-planting hundreds of native plants.

This advanced mitigation project compensates wetlands and stream buffers for the unavoidable effects capital construction – such as sidewalks and parking lots – can have on these sensitive areas. The result of a fully-implemented Advanced Mitigation Program will be improved ecological outcomes at a lower price and within a shorter timeframe than could be provided by a site-by-site mitigation process. This is a win-win for both use of public funds and for the environmental protection.