



## Neighborhood Meeting with City Council

### Moss Bay Neighborhoods

Submitted Questions/Comments (9)

Meeting Date: May 21, 2012



## City Manager's Office

1. What does the city do to support and promote Kirkland businesses?

**Response:** *The Economic Development Program for the City of Kirkland is housed in the City Manager's Office. The program oversees economic development, tourism and staffs the Cultural Council.*

*The current work plan includes a major focus on improvements to the Totem Lake Business District to help it achieve its destiny as the economic development generator of Kirkland, to support current businesses and attract new investment. Infrastructure improvements including completion of 120th and purchase and redevelopment of the abandoned BNSF corridor for multi-modal transportation will add capacity to the Totem Lake transportation system. Flood protection, code relaxation and regulatory relief are either under review or have already been implemented to ensure the vitality of existing business and encourage new businesses to locate here. The Totem Lake Bulletin, a quarterly publication, highlights new and existing businesses to promote Totem Lake as a business hub, and also to encourage other businesses to relocate to Totem Lake.*

*The program works with existing large and small businesses to help them succeed in Kirkland. A part-time Business Retention Consultant holds a monthly orientation for new businesses and dispenses technical advice to smaller businesses on a one-on-one basis. The program also coordinates larger economic development projects like the Parkplace development agreement and permitting, a project of over a million square feet of office space, that will house innovative Information Technology companies, provide well paying jobs for residents, and a flow of customers for existing downtown eateries and boutiques. Other projects like the zoning improvements to the Lakeview neighborhood and the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) will add the critical mass of employees and residents to sustain day-night activity and new retail establishments in the southern part of Kirkland.*

*Promotion of Kirkland as a business and tourist destination as well as a quality residential community also is a key part of the Economic Development Program. With taxes raised from hotel stays, the program provides video and brochures, advertises in major destination magazines, and operates a website, [exploreKirkland.com](http://exploreKirkland.com). The thinking is that if you visit Kirkland, especially in good weather, you may also want to relocate to Kirkland with your family and/or your business. The Program has hosted travel writers, seeded major tourism events and sponsored workshops for restaurants and other venues to both promote and build the tourism offering.*

## Finance Department

2. Does the city make it a priority to contract with local businesses for products and services it needs?

**Response:** *At the direction of the City Council, City staff has explored implementing a local preference purchasing program and it was determined that existing State law precludes such a program. However, City employees are very conscientious about providing local suppliers, contractors and consultants with the opportunity to compete for City contracts. For example: when soliciting bids for small works roster projects less than \$35,000, local contractors are routinely notified of the opportunity to bid, to the extent allowed by State law. Also, many discretionary purchases are made by City staff at Kirkland businesses using City credit cards and purchase orders.*

## Planning Department

3. As a resident of the Portsmouth, please ask the Design Review Board to refuse having automobiles exposed in their garage. McCloud wants to have an open area garage 5 stories above ground and autos exposed on top floors... horrible for residents in the area, plus the smell of gasoline, and loud noise of motors unacceptable.

**Response:** *The Design Review Board reviews projects for compliance with adopted design guidelines. One of the guidelines states that the intrusive qualities of parking garages must be mitigated and the guidelines will be applied appropriately to projects reviewed by the Design Review Board.*

4. Well here is the “Big Question” what is going on with Touchstone and what is currently happening. We hear stories about who is being kept on as a business, which may not be part of the “big picture,” etc. It is time the City of Kirkland and residents get the real story. How about someone from Touchstone coming forward and giving us a “true” update. What if any major leases have been signed and what key current business are going to be part of the “New Parkplace.” Now is the time.

**Response:** *We have been told that Touchstone is actively working to find tenants for the Parkplace redevelopment project, but they have not disclosed whether any agreements have been reached. We will inform Touchstone that there is community interest and ask that they provide as much information as possible to the public.*

**A-P Hurd of Touchstone Response:** *We are actively working on pre-leasing the office portion of the project, which is the part that drives our ability to finance the new construction. The project is quite large, so it requires a large amount of office pre-leasing. As you might imagine, we are unable to share information about any lease negotiations before we have a signed lease.*

*When we have reached the pre-leasing threshold we need to move forward, we will know our construction and delivery schedule. At that point we will be able to confirm the schedule to the public and we will also begin to have serious conversations with retail tenants, because we will be able to tell them when they can open their doors in the new project. We are actively working with existing tenants to find a way to bring them back in the rebuilt Kirkland Parkplace. Contact A-P Hurd 206-357-2304 or [APHurd@touchstonecorp.com](mailto:APHurd@touchstonecorp.com) for additional information.*

5. I would like to ask them if they are going to do anything to change or clarify the BN zoning and make it better reflect the comprehensive plan.

**Response:** *The City Council has directed the Planning Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations for areas zoned BN. The Planning Commission presented a status report to the Council on April 3 and the Council provided feedback on May 15. The Planning Commission will hold another study meeting on May 31. A public hearing will be held on June 28 after which a recommended Plan and/or zoning changes will be forwarded to the City Council.*

6. Can all street names/numbers be included on zoning maps?

**Response:** *Most versions of the zoning map do have street names and numbers – for example those at the Planning Department at City Hall and the version posted online at [http://www.kirklandwa.gov/depart/Information\\_Technology/GIS/GIS\\_Maps.htm](http://www.kirklandwa.gov/depart/Information_Technology/GIS/GIS_Maps.htm). Due to the scale of the map, many of the names may be difficult to read. However, the scale of the online version of the map can be adjusted to focus in on a specific area and more easily read the street names.*

7. I'm trying to understand why we can't, as Kirkland residents, tell our representatives that they are our representatives and as such are directed by us to disallow unlimited density in BN zones. Can we ask our lawyers to submit an outline of a lawsuit to the council if they do not represent us according to our overwhelming majority of support for limiting BN zones? I once told the council at one of their Tuesday meetings that they would need to weigh the difference between a lawsuit brought on by us neighbors or a lawsuit from the developer. Surely a representative democratic council is obligated to do the citizen's bidding?!?!? I guess I don't understand how this council does whatever they want to with total disregard for the residents of Kirkland. How soon can we vote them out of office?

**Response:** *Your comments are noted and will be forwarded to the City Council. Neighborhood Council Meetings provide a good opportunity for residents to speak with their City Council Members about issues affecting their neighborhoods.*

## Public Works Department

8. Since Kirkland is striving to be a "green" city, has the City Council given any thought to banning plastic shopping bags at local grocery stores?

**Response:** *Due to the increase in opportunities for residents to recycle plastic shopping bags at local grocery stores as well as in their curbside recycling, the City is not pursuing a ban on plastic shopping bags at this time. Staff encourages the use of reusable shopping bags by providing bags free to Kirkland residents throughout the year. To request a free, reusable shopping bag, call the Recycle Hotline at (425) 587-3812.*

9. What plans are in place to mitigate the considerable shaking of condos in downtown Kirkland as articulated, hybrid buses (route 255) speed down Kirkland Way, past the Microsoft parking lot, as it turns into Kirkland Avenue? The shaking (which feels like a small earthquake for about 3 seconds) started in November, 2011, when these new buses started going up and down Kirkland Way incessantly at all hours; the shaking pre-dates the sewer road work being done on Kirkland Avenue which of course also has had a temporary impact. Kevin Desmond of Metro says the Kirkland City Council and Google pressured Metro into creating the current routes and they are in stone, while I heard the Planning Commission claim it was Metro who wanted the bus station and their hand was forced into what Metro wanted. What about the homeowner taxpayer who's property is losing value when the condo shakes for 3 seconds while buses go by? How does our voice get heard? Kevin Desmond indicated he put a slow order on this street, but that hasn't really helped. He says re-paving of the road surface with 2" of asphalt this spring will cure the problem; however, the problem pre-existed the road work, so that remains a concern. This problem has affected at least 6 other homeowners in my building who face Kirkland Avenue. Thank you for taking time to respond to this question and for your service to our community.

**Response:** *In order to better serve businesses and residents along 6<sup>th</sup> Street South including Google and those that work in the Parkplace center, the City of Kirkland worked with King County Metro to utilize 6<sup>th</sup> Street South and Kirkland Avenue as a viable transit route serving the Downtown Transit Center. Transit service is a significant element in the City's overall goal of providing a multi-modal transportation system and supporting growth that will continue in the community. After the completion of the new Downtown Transit Center, Metro prepared to move all transit routes to State Street which would have eliminated transit access to a growing and important section of the community. The City provided modifications to the proposed route by modifying the intersection configuration, installing crosswalks along 6<sup>th</sup> Street South, and working with Metro to install transit shelters.*

*City staff is aware of the current bus passing issues that have been raised by residents along this portion of Kirkland Avenue, the lower speed limits implemented by Metro in response, the monitoring that has been done, and the upcoming overlay/restoration. Our understanding is that the trench restoration has addressed the issue to some degree and that final paving scheduled early this summer needs to be completed before a final evaluation can be made. Staff will continue to coordinate with King County Metro on the project final restoration and monitor the results.*