



## CITY OF KIRKLAND

City Manager's Office

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3001

[www.kirklandwa.gov](http://www.kirklandwa.gov)

---

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager  
**From:** Kari Page, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator  
**Date:** June 20, 2013  
**Subject:** City Council Meetings with the Neighborhoods

#### RECOMMENDATION:

City Council considers a recommendation from staff regarding the current structure of City Council Meetings with the Neighborhoods and provides direction on final options for the 2013 fall schedule.

#### BACKGROUND:

In 2012 the Council asked staff to review the City Council's current processes and timelines for Council Meetings with the City's Neighborhood organizations and to develop potential options for improvements. The goal of the review and options were to enable the Council to meet "more people, more often" about issues that matter to the community. Options for changes were discussed at the November 7, 2012 and February 19, 2013 City Council meetings. Council asked staff to obtain input from Neighborhood representatives at the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods (KAN) meeting in March as well as Kirkland citizens.

**KAN:** At KAN's March meeting, representatives were asked to break into groups and identify the pros and cons of five meeting schedule options. They reported out to the whole group and had an open discussion about each option. Then, they were asked to select the option they preferred. Each neighborhood was given one vote (regardless of the number of representatives at the meeting). Twelve of the thirteen neighborhood associations were represented (one provided their input after the meeting). The results are as follows (see Attachment A for a full summary of the pros and cons listed on flip charts at the meeting):

Option 1: Status Quo

Option not chosen

Option 2: Status Quo with Town Hall  
Moss Bay  
Everest  
Central Houghton  
North Rose Hill  
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails  
Market

Option 3: Combine Neighborhoods  
Juanita Neighborhoods  
Evergreen Hill

Option 4: More Meetings More Often  
Finn Hill  
Highlands

Option 5: Voluntary Combinations  
Norkirk

**Online Survey:** An online survey was sent to the Neighborhood List Serve (1200 email addresses) and forwarded by neighborhood leaders to their associations (additional 1000+ with some duplication with the List Serve). Respondents were only allowed to complete the survey once (through electronically blocking duplicate responses from the same computer). The 100 responses represent about 4.5% of the estimated invitations that were sent. Although the results of a “self-selected” or “non-random” survey cannot be interpreted as representative of the general public, the responses do reflect the interests of 100 additional Kirkland residents.

See Appendix B for a full report of the results. Of the 100 responses, sixty percent said they never have attended a City Council Meeting in the Neighborhood. This is not a fatal flaw, as information from those who choose not to attend these meetings provides useful information to increase participation.

The five options considered by KAN were consolidated into four options to simplify the online survey. The responses to two of the most relevant questions are listed below.

*The City Council meets with each of the 13 neighborhoods on a rotating basis every three years. Select the most appropriate statement that best describes your interest in the schedule for these meetings.*

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Every three years is not enough.	72.9%	62
Every three years is just right.	22.4%	19
Every three years is too much.	0.0%	0
There is no need to hold these meetings.	4.7%	4
Other (please specify)		7
<b>answered question</b>		<b>85</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>15</b>

*Select the recommendation which best aligns with your interests related to the City Council meetings with the neighborhoods.*

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Continue to focus City Council Meetings with the Neighborhoods on one neighborhood at a time.*	18.4%	16
Continue to focus City Council Meetings with the Neighborhoods on one neighborhood at a time and hold one or two citywide town hall meetings a year.	33.3%	29
Combine smaller adjacent neighborhoods for City Council Meetings with the Neighborhoods.	8.0%	7
Combine smaller adjacent neighborhoods for City Council Meetings with the Neighborhoods and hold one or two citywide town hall meetings a year.	40.2%	35
Other (please specify)		5

\* Option one, includes two of the KAN options (Status Quo and Status Quo with more meetings more often).

The first table indicates the large majority of respondents (72.9%) said the existing three year schedule for these meetings is not often enough. The lower table shows two main themes: first, the majority of the respondents (73%) prefer options that include town halls; second, a slight majority of the respondents (51.7%) prefer options with a focus on one neighborhood at a time, while only 48.2% selected options with combining smaller adjacent neighborhoods.

## Staff Recommendation to Council

Informed by the outreach results, on May 28 staff recommended to the Finance and Administration Committee that the Council Meetings in the Neighborhoods continue to be focused on one neighborhood at a time, but with topic-specific town halls added as needed. This was recommended not only because of the results of these informal surveys, but because there is a fair amount of concern within the smaller neighborhoods that their issues could be left out of a larger/combined neighborhood setting. They appreciate the Council's attention to their specific neighborhood issues and enjoy the comfort of a smaller, informal setting. However, staff also has had inquiries from some neighborhoods that would like to combine for the purposes of the Council Meetings in the Neighborhoods. Staff additional recommendation is that Kirkland honors those requests if both neighborhoods want to combine (similar to South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails).

The larger neighborhoods either feel that neighborhoods should be combined or additional meetings should be added to cycle through the neighborhoods faster (either a town hall or more individual neighborhood meetings). This feedback in part is why staff is recommending adding one or two town halls to the schedule over the next year rather than making substantial changes to the schedule or asking neighborhoods to combine at this time.

At the June 8 Community Planning Day, the Council held their first "town hall" format meeting and staff heard positive feedback from the 45-50 participants. There may be an opportunity in the fall to do another, more centered on the Comprehensive Plan Visioning Phase of the update process. Staff will also look at the format to provide more interaction for the City Council.

Staff will also reach out to neighborhoods in the planning stage each year to see if any neighborhoods want to voluntarily combine for any particular issue/or reason.

## Recommendation Summary

- No formal change in the schedule for the City Council Meetings in the Neighborhoods.
- Allow smaller neighborhoods to voluntarily combine for their City Council Meetings in the Neighborhoods.
- Offer at least one City Council Town Hall meeting to allow anyone to come talk with the City Council in an informal setting at least once a year.

Based upon this recommendation, the following preliminary list of meetings would be scheduled in the future.

2012

Complete: Moss Bay (May 21, 2012)  
Complete: Lakeview (March 29, 2012)  
Complete: North Rose Hill (November 19, 2012)

2013

No spring 2013 meeting  
How to plan for Kirkland's business districts: (June 8, 2013)  
Possible Town Hall meeting in the fall (topic – Kirkland 2035 – Visioning)  
Everest (November 19, 2013 – preliminary to be determined)  
Highlands/Norkirk (to be determined)

2014

Market  
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails  
Possible Town Hall meeting  
Totem Lake/Evergreen Hill  
Central Houghton

**Council Direction Needed**

If the Council concurs with the staff recommendation, staff will proceed with scheduling the Everest and Highlands/Norkirk Neighborhood meetings for 2013. If Council does not agree with the recommendation, staff will be seeking direction on what options the Council prefers or whether additional information is needed prior to final Council action.



# Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods

## Discussion of City Council Meetings in the Neighborhoods

March 13, 2012

### Option 1: Status Quo

**Neighborhood Votes:**

- None of the neighborhoods selected this option

**Pro:**

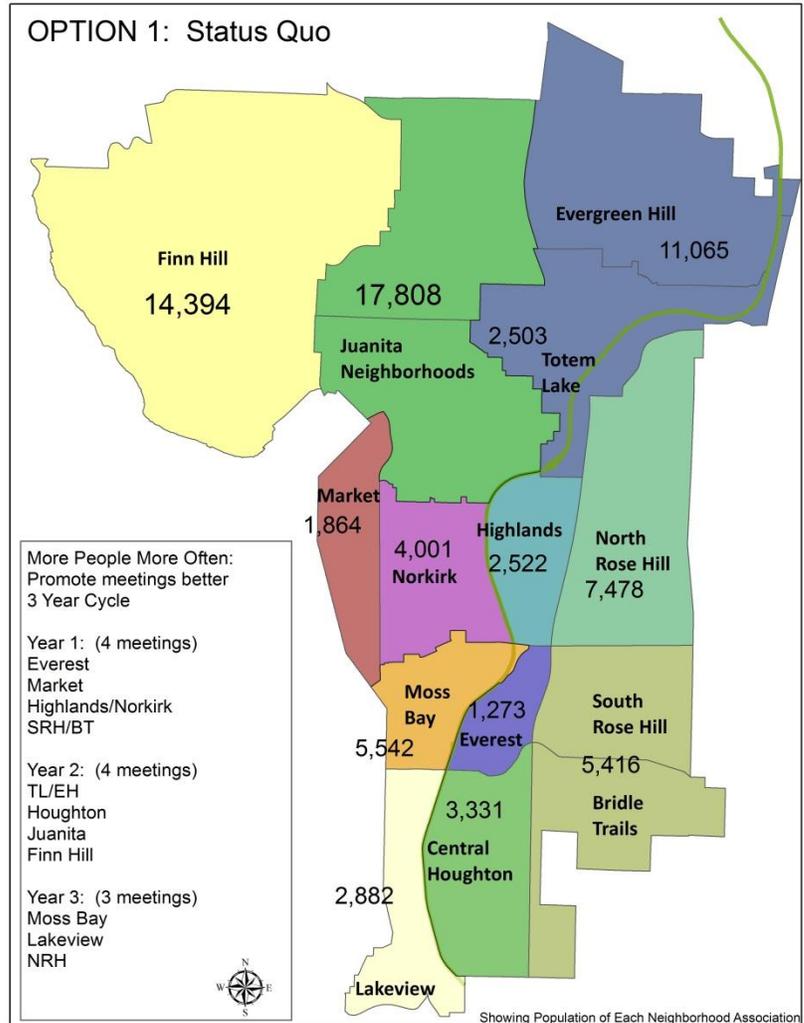
- ✓ People familiar with status quo
- ✓ Neighborhood specific focus & issues
- ✓ More small scale, opportunity to speak
- ✓ Intimate
- ✓ Proven formula
- ✓ Get to know neighbors, council better
- ✓ Held "close to home"

**Con:**

- ✓ Some neighborhood turnout too small
- ✓ Does not allow common interests between neighborhoods
- ✓ Focuses on trees (neighborhoods), not the forest (city)

**Tweak:**

- ✓ Too infrequent – maybe fewer council members, more often?



# Attachment A

## Option 2: Status Quo with Town Hall

### Neighborhood Votes:

- Moss Bay (*east/west town hall, option #3 is not acceptable*)
- Everest (*east/west for town hall meetings*)
- Central Houghton (*east/west for town hall meetings – make town hall regional issues only and keep neighborhood meetings to local issues only – prefer citywide town hall – north/south one year and east/west the next year*)
- North Rose Hill (*east/west town hall*)
- South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails
- Market (*submitted preference after KAN meeting*)

### Pro:

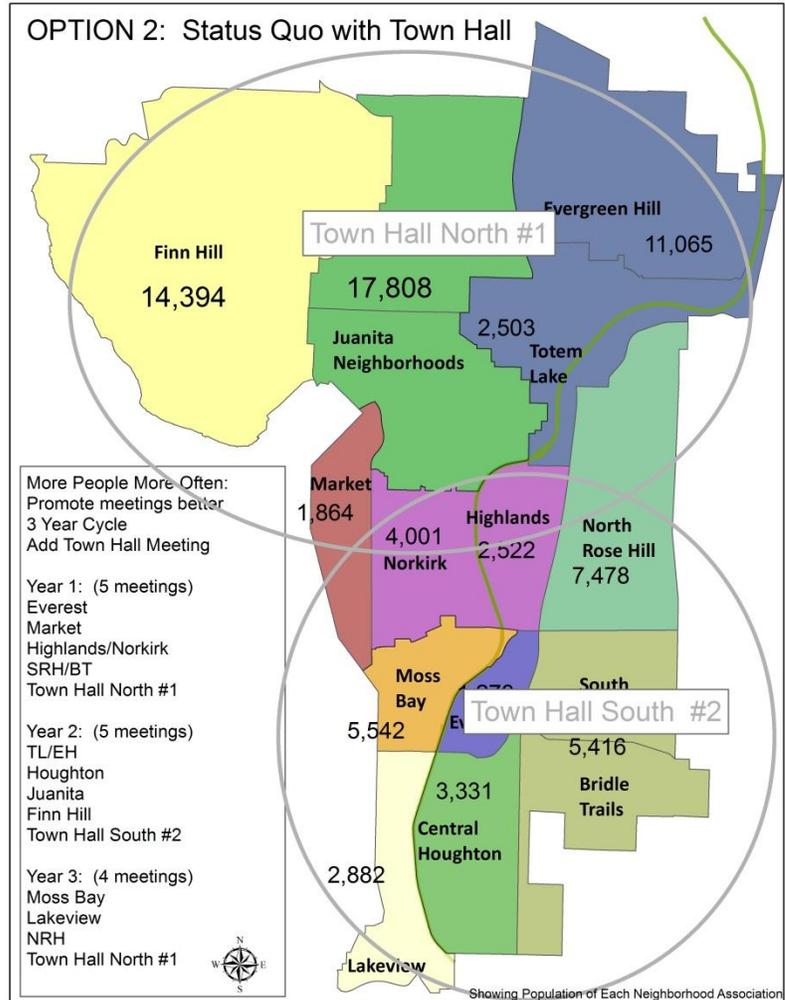
- ✓ Can discuss neighborhood unique issues and also broader perspective
- ✓ Relieves staff time for regional issues at town hall
- ✓ Don't need full staff at neighborhood level meetings
- ✓ Adds more meetings (cons for council)
- ✓ Increases attendance locals engaged

### Cons:

- ✓ Why not east/west instead of north/south
- ✓ Three year cycle is too long (see tweak)

### Tweak:

- ✓ Invite adjacent neighborhood to individual meetings
- ✓ Regional at town hall, not at neighborhood individual meetings
- ✓ Add city wide town hall, every year
- ✓ Want more council, less staff, include City Manager



# Attachment A

## Option 3: Combined Neighborhoods

### Neighborhood Votes:

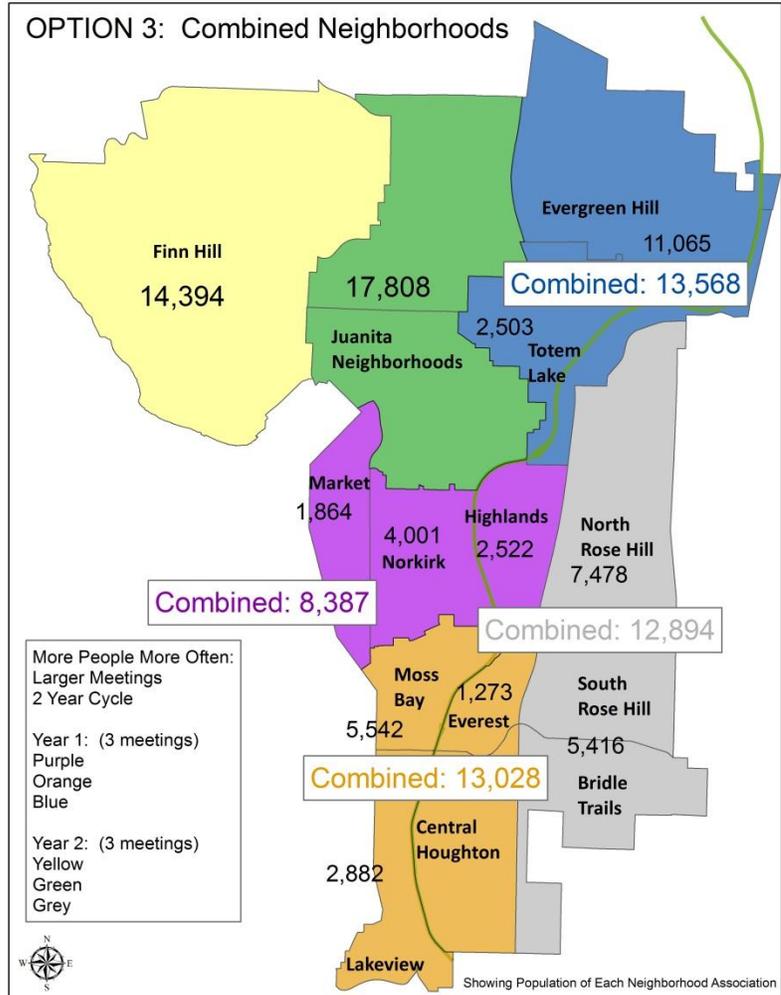
- Juanita (with two town halls)
- Evergreen Hill

### Pro:

- ✓ Easier for Council
- ✓ More often
- ✓ More people
- ✓ More equitable representation (larger neighborhoods more often)
- ✓ Brings more neighborhoods together
- ✓ More people could mean more leverage with council/city
- ✓ May address higher level issues

### Con:

- ✓ Doesn't necessarily mean more people
- ✓ Not definitive for Neighborhoods
- ✓ Less time for questions (if more people)
- ✓ Meeting could be hijacked
- ✓ Issues not as neighborhood specific
- ✓ Issues could be too neighborhood specific



# Attachment A

## Option 4: More Meetings More Often

### Neighborhood Votes:

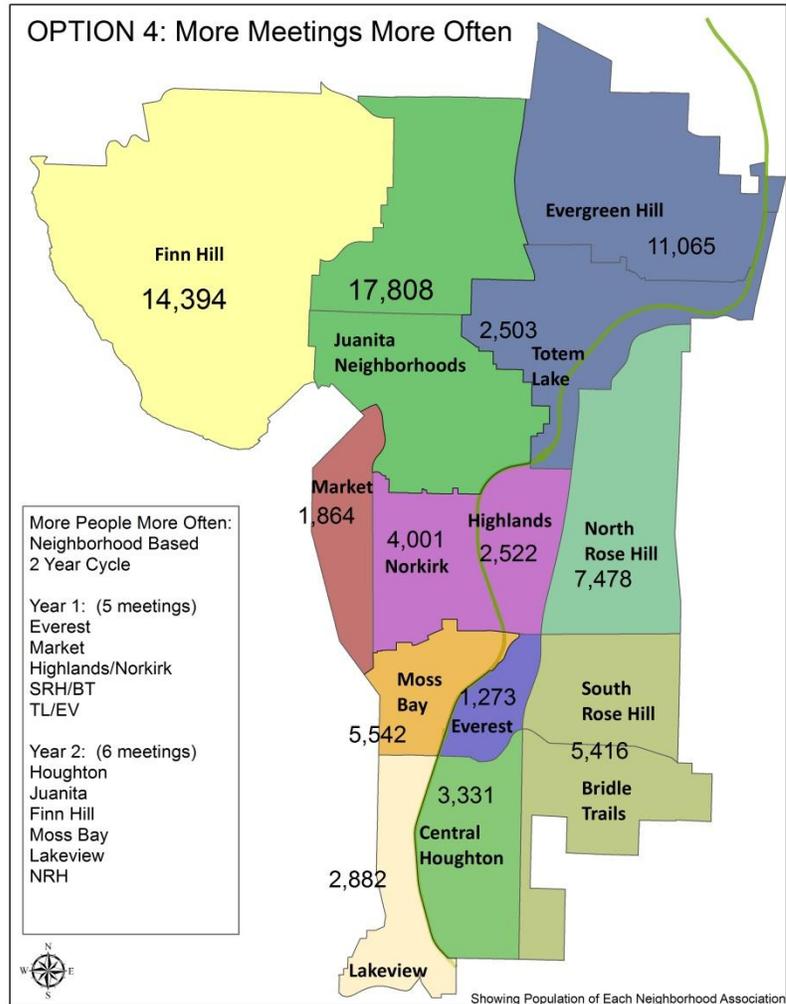
- Finn Hill
- Highlands

### Pro:

- ✓ Every 2 years (is more often)
- ✓ More attendance at the meetings
- ✓ Entire Council and Staff to NA meeting more often

### Con:

- ✓ Loose intimacy with combining



# Attachment A

## Option 5: Voluntary Combinations

### Neighborhood Votes:

- Norkirk

### Pro:

- ✓ Ability to meet with Council more often (if you combine)
- ✓ Keeping the meetings with individual neighborhood allows us to discuss issues specific to our neighborhood

### Con:

- ✓ If you don't combine meetings with other neighborhoods then you only get to meet with Council every 3 years
- ✓ Tweak
- ✓ Don't penalize small neighborhoods for not combining – allow voluntary combinations but keep everyone at the same cycle
- ✓ Allow flexibility in combining meetings with other neighborhoods
- ✓ Be able to split from being combined – if an issues arises that is more neighborhood centric
- ✓ Be able to combine if an issue arises that involves one or more neighborhoods
- ✓ Be able to request a town hall meeting (extra meeting) if needed and wanted by several neighborhoods for an issue affecting all

