



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Department of Public Works**  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800  
[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** David Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director  
David Godfrey P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager

**Date:** November 9, 2006

**Subject:** Response to Ms. Annelise Alma regarding one-way streets and location of a grocery store in Juanita Village.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter responding to the comments expressed by Ms. Alma.

### BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Ms. Alma suggests conversion of Lake Street/Lake Washington Boulevard and State Street/Lakeview Drive to one way streets in order to relieve congestion in downtown Kirkland. She also expresses a desire to have a grocery store located in or near Juanita Village.

One-way street pairs are generally thought to decrease livability for a number of reasons such as extra travel and pedestrian safety. One article that discusses some of the disadvantages of one way streets is available at the Transportation Research Board website

[http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/circulars/ec019/Ec019\\_f2.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/circulars/ec019/Ec019_f2.pdf) .

You may recall that the developers of Juanita Village worked with a number of grocery stores in an attempt to get a grocery store in the project. Various factors such as location, economic conditions and size of available site worked against making the project attractive to a grocery store.

November 3, 2006

**RECEIVED**

Annelise Alma  
10406 NE 113<sup>th</sup> PL  
Kirkland, WA 98033

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CITY OF KIRKLAND  
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Dear Mayor Lauinger,

I am an eighteen year old resident of Kirkland who has recently become interested in the issues that have evolved around our growing city, and its welfare. Since the city is changing rapidly, I believe it is important that we continue to work hard to make Kirkland a better place to live. As our city's mayor, I know that you care about its residents and strive to make public services available to everyone. Over the past couple of months, I have noticed a major problem that has affected many citizens of Kirkland – traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard.

With an estimated population of over 45,740 people, Kirkland needs to improve its traffic flow. Everyday, many of the city's residents have to face driving in rush hour traffic through the downtown area. As a student who attends high school in the Seattle area, I sometimes have to drive home on Lake Washington Boulevard. Some nights, it takes me over an hour to get home.

To relieve this congestion, I would like to suggest that the city look into the development of separate, one-way north and south routes. This could easily be done using existing streets, with a minimum of right-of way acquisition. From Central Way, southbound traffic could use both lanes of Lake Street, and then at Carillon Point go back to the existing two-way street configuration. Northbound traffic from Carillon Point could use Lakeview Drive, and then through right-of way modifications, follow the approximate route of State Street, and then reconnect with Central Way at Peter Kirk Park. I think that this is a good plan to relieve traffic congestion in the greater area of Downtown Kirkland.

In the lower Juanita neighborhood north of 116<sup>th</sup> Street at 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue, there is substantial residential and commercial redevelopment. The only types of businesses that surround the apartments are now five dry cleaners, and many restaurants. However, there is no grocery store. Many residents who live in or near the apartments have to drive at least two miles to get to Fred Meyer, Safeway, or QFC. It's okay to have neighborhood restaurants, but I think that it is important that a market be nearby as well. As you may know, Market Place, a grocery store, was located where the apartments are built today. Even Michael's variety store was once a grocery. For many citizens, it was nice to be able to go to a small market that was located within walking distance of their house. Now times have changed, and it is harder for many to make a trip to the store, because there isn't one located nearby. I think that it would be nice to see a grocery store located somewhere around the lower part of Juanita. It would benefit a lot of people there.

As the mayor of Kirkland, I know you care a great deal about our city's residents. I thank you for taking the time to listen about how I think Kirkland could improve itself even more.

Sincerely,



Annelise Alma

November 22, 2006

**DRAFT**

Ms. Annelise Alma  
10406 NE 113th Pl  
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Ms. Alma:

Thank you very much for your recent letter concerning your thoughts on improving Kirkland. We appreciate your well thought out and creative ideas.

One way streets became popular in the US during the 1950's and 1960's as traffic engineers looked for ways to move a much traffic as possible, as quickly as possible through cities. In the 1980s and 1990's it became clearer that the most livable cities had streets that did more than just move high volumes of traffic quickly. One of our goals is to make Kirkland as livable as possible. Many cities converted one-way streets back to two-way streets as planners and engineers noted some of the limitations of one-way street networks. Admittedly, many of the downsides of one-way streets effect local travelers more than commuters.

One-way networks require more turns and travel than do two-way streets. This is known as out of direction travel. For example consider a driver leaving a driveway on a south-only street and wishing to go to a destination north of them on that same south-only street. They must first go south, then use a street that connects to a north-only street, then go north to another street that connects back to the south only street, then travel back south to their destination. One way streets are sometimes less useful for transit users. Instead of getting back on the bus across the street from where one got off, its necessary to find the street that carries traffic in the other direction. If Lake Street and State Street were one-way streets, that might involve walking up a steep hill. Studies show that pedestrians have a harder time crossing two lanes of traffic traveling in the same direction than crossing one lane in each direction. Increasing the speed of vehicles with one-way streets often has negative consequences on quality of life. In fact, we've heard from residents on Lake Washington Boulevard that would like us to decrease travel speed rather than increase it. Intersections where one-way streets become two-way sometimes have special problems too. These are some of the reasons why, although we've considered long one-way street pairs, we've never implemented them.

At the request of neighbors, the developers of Juanita Village worked hard to get a small grocery store to locate in their project. Although they tried, with the encouragement of the City, for over 2 years in the end they were not able to find a willing partner. So, although Juanita Village has two banks, an athletic equipment store, a large drug store, a barbershop, a dentist's office and other tenants, it doesn't have a grocery store. While certain uses are allowed or disallowed through City zoning, it's important to remember that the City doesn't require specific uses like grocery stores; the particular mix of uses in a development is largely the decision of the private sector.

Thank you once again for your interest in making Kirkland a better place to live. Please feel free to share any other ideas you have with us in the future.

Sincerely,  
Kirkland City Council

James L. Lauinger  
Mayor