

CROSS KIRKLAND CORRIDOR

Final Stakeholder Interview Report

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Introduction

The project team conducted 11 interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders to identify the ideas, opportunities, needs, and concerns related to the Cross-Kirkland Corridor (CKC). Interviews were conducted early in the master planning process to ensure the team was aware of and understood stakeholder views and opinions prior to developing any concepts or alternatives for the CKC.

Interview results will be used by the project team to inform the master plan and to ensure that the public involvement plan reflects the community's needs and effectively engages all stakeholders and the public.

Topic Guide

An interview topic guide was developed to ensure all desired topics were covered and that interviewees were asked the same questions. The topic guide asked questions to better understand stakeholders' familiarity with and interest in the corridor, their perceptions about opportunities within the corridor, and about the best ways to keep them and the community involved in the master planning process. While the topic guide was intended to structure stakeholder discussions, interviewees offered other comments as well. A copy of the topic guide is provided in Appendix A of this report.

Interviewees

A list of potential interviewees was developed to ensure that a representative cross-section of corridor interests were included in the interviews. Representatives, from neighborhood associations, businesses, advocacy groups, educational institutions, and government were invited to participate in an interview. The following organizations were invited to participate in an interview:

- Central Houghton Neighborhood
- Everest Neighborhood
- Highlands Neighborhood
- Astronics
- Evergreen Hospital
- The Heathman Hotel
- NYTEC
- CamWest
- Eastside Trail Advocates
- Kirkland Greenways
- Lake Washington Institute of Technology
- Lake Washington School District
- Kirkland Planning Commission
- Kirkland Park Board
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

Results

Eleven of the 15 organization contacted agreed to participate in the interviews. Interviews were conducted between June 18 and July 9, 2013. Interviews were conducted in person by Chris Hoffman of Stepherson & Associates and typically lasted between thirty minutes and an hour. Interviews were conducted in person with the exception of one phone interview. A summary of the interviews, which identifies common themes and key results, is provided below. The **bold type** corresponds to the specific questions that were asked during the interviews.

About the Interviewees

All interviewees were **familiar with the Cross Kirkland Corridor**, and a majority of them were very familiar with it. Their familiarity stemmed from participating on the City of Kirkland Business Roundtable, adopting segments of the corridor, using the corridor, and being involved in previous planning stages.

Interviewees had a range of expectation for the master plan, including that it:

- Will help to promote Kirkland and set the stage for a new amenity for Kirkland
- Will set a clear framework for the short-, mid-, and long-term development, operation, and maintenance of the corridor
- Recognize the corridor as a transportation option, and not just a recreational opportunity
- Be user-friendly but have data and analysis for those who are interested
- Be integrated into the City's transportation and economic development plans
- Have a vision and steps necessary to achieve it, with recommended priorities
- Be clear about light rail/transit

Interviewees had a variety of responses about **how the results of master plan will affect their organizations**. Key among them were that it will:

- Have a positive impact to our organization
- Provide transportation and recreational benefits, and access to all of Kirkland
- Provide connections to other key parts of the community (beaches, parks, businesses, schools) and gathering opportunities
- Address all road crossing and ensure they are safe and pedestrian-friendly
- Remove barriers to children getting to school by active transportation

About the Master Plan

This section summarizes interviewee responses to a number of questions about the master plan.

Interviewees identified a number of **interests regarding the corridor**. The primary interest among all interviewees was the trail. Interviewees made a number of comments about the trail, which included:

- The trail should be well-marked and easy to find for residents and out of town visitors alike
- The trail should be a place that the whole family can safely enjoy

- Providing connections to neighborhoods and businesses
- Separating bikes from pedestrians and fast bikers from slow bikers
- Making the trail safe (call boxes)

Other common themes for interests included:

- Making it a multi-modal corridor
- Transit and light rail
- Rezoning to encourage trail-oriented development
- Provide economic benefits to the Totem Lake Mall.

When asked about a **future vision for the corridor** the most common responses given by interviewees were:

- A trail with easy access
- A safe walking path with connections to the community
- A corridor that can be used for events and parades and that helps give Kirkland its identity
- A multi-modal transportation resource
- The community's spine that provide connections within the City
- Local pockets of interest
- Maximizing the entire corridor – more than a trail
- Looking beyond Kirkland's portion of the corridor -- connecting to Bellevue, Woodinville, and other communities in the region

When asked what they thought what was the **biggest opportunity presented by the corridor**, interviewee responses highlighted the following:

- An urban wilderness and connections to nature
- A linear garden
- Attract businesses and spur economic development
- Creating a new north-south transportation corridor
- Make it unique (Kalakala Ferry superstructure as a gateway)
- Inspire interest and use by making small places of interest
- Outdoor recreation
- Transit
- Access and connections

Interviewees were asked if the corridor should incorporate particular themes or concepts. The most common responses included:

- A native northwest forest in more natural sections
- Views and a wide open feeling
- Don't try to fit into what exists today; think about tomorrow and go with a strong vision

- Adopt personalities of different sections
- Different activities: gardens, beach volleyball, plantings, resting areas, access to commercial areas
- Reflect the corridor's (and Kirkland's) history

Interviewees identified a number of **other corridors they have seen or visited that they view as successful** or worthy examples. These included:

- The Burke Gilman Trail (goes through interesting places; would want separated bike and pedestrian trails)
- The Detroit Greenway, Detroit, MI (fast and slow lanes for bikes)
- UC Davis Greenbelt, Davis, CA (lots of connections)
- The Camino De Santiago, in Northern Spain (branding)
- The Sammamish River Trail (connections to businesses)
- Wissahickon Valley Park Trail (Forbidden Drive), Philadelphia, PA
- The Highline New York, NY (you can have open space anywhere)
- Sunriver, OR (network of bike trails separated from traffic)

The most prevalent responses to the question, **what are the most important issues to be addressed by the master plan**, were:

- The long-term maintenance and operational costs of the corridor
- Use technology to create interest and interpret history of the corridor and Kirkland
- Serving the competing interests; address controversies head on
- Road crossings (safety)
- Totem Lake area
- Consider connections to all of Kirkland, including I-405 crossings (need to improve these as they are not adequate or ADA compliant)
- The current legal hurdle
- Funding: consider forming a special district to help fund improvements (property owners whose values increase as a result of the trail need to help fund it)

Interviewees identified **other factors that may affect the outcome of the master plan**. The most common factors identified were:

- Budget and funding, specifically the State Transportation Budget
- Sound Transit, and ST3
- The high standard for safety that must be obtained in the public domain
- Litigation
- Development that could take place in the interim and that may not be consistent with the vision for the corridor
- Making sure we inform people, so there aren't surprises at the end of the process
- Corridor abutters, who may not want increased use, specifically transit

About Staying Involved

This section summarizes interviewee responses to questions about staying involved in the master planning process.

Interviewees identified a number of ways to **best keep them informed and involved** during the master planning process. These included:

- Listservs (but need to consolidate lists and use it more regularly and strategically)
- Local media
- Neighborhood associations and the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods
- Large events
- Events on the corridor with entertainment and food trucks
- Business Roundtable
- Website
- Large outdoor signage
- Youtube videos
- Booths at events and festivals
- Chamber of Commerce

All interviewees said **they plan on being involved through the planning process**. When asked if there are **other organizations that should be involved**, interviewees made the following suggestions:

- Commercial and residential developers
- Teen Centers; schools
- Kirkland Heritage Society
- Bicycle coalitions
- PTA's
- King County Conservation Voters

When asked **how public input should influence decisions** related the master plan, interviewees said the following:

- Listen to all input but make decisions based on the greater good; don't give in to the loudest voices
- Don't try to make everyone happy
- Embrace everything that is said but you will have to make choices; explain why and why not you address input
- Involve people early and then provide options for the public to react to
- Look for general trends in what you hear, show what it could look like and explain why decisions were made

Interviewees made the following observations when asked if there was **anything else we should consider in the planning process**:

- Communicate the schedule
- Ask kids “what is missing in their lives?”
- Don’t passively “decorate” the corridor
- Consider how it fits in the 2035 plan and how it influences that picture
- Be thoughtful and careful with concepts and how they might influence surroundings, especially in neighborhoods
- Provide regular updates
- Consider a bikeshare program
- Keep it simple and affordable; we don’t want something we can’t afford
- Through rezoning, encourage businesses and property owners to reorient building towards the corridor

Interviewee responses to an inquiry if they had **any questions they’d like to ask** included:

- Will there be a version of the plan that does not include transit?
- How will construction be funded? Will there be another levy?

Appendix A – Interview Topic Guide

Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan Interview Topic Guide

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the City of Kirkland had envisioned a Cross Kirkland Trail, a facility for bicycle and pedestrian transportation that would be parallel to Eastside Rail Corridor’s active rail line. That vision soon became a possibility through the 2008 sale of the Woodinville subdivision from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to the Port of Seattle, placing the Eastside Rail Corridor (between Snohomish and Renton via Kirkland) into public ownership. The Kirkland City Council and Transportation Commission moved quickly to identify and articulate the citizen’s interests and priorities for the rail corridor, by issuing an “Interest Statement” based on an extensive public involvement effort. On April 13, 2012, the City of Kirkland closed a five million dollar purchase from the Port of Seattle for a 5.75 mile portion of the line. Today, the opportunity of a lifetime exists for the City of Kirkland to implement the citizens’ vision for a welcoming, transportation-oriented facility for pedestrians and bicyclists, coupled with a high-capacity transit system that connects Kirkland to the region. The Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan process and resulting plan will provide an engaging common vision that builds excitement for the corridor.

We are beginning the planning process by conducting a series of interviews with a broad spectrum of corridor interests in order to fully understand those interests and to incorporate and address the ideas, questions, and concerns into the corridor plan and design – specifically how the corridor will look, function, and feel.

Questions

About you

1. Name of stakeholder:
2. Do you represent an organization as you provide input on the Cross Kirkland Corridor Project? If so, what organization?
3. What is your history and relationship to the Cross Kirkland Corridor?
4. How familiar are you with the Cross Kirkland Corridor?
5. What are your expectations for the master plan?

6. How will the results of the master plan affect you/your organization?

About the Project

7. What are your main interests with regard to the corridor (trail, bicycling, walking, arts, open space, transit, tourism, etc.)?
8. Do you have a future vision for the Cross Kirkland Corridor? How should it serve Kirkland residents and/or the region into the future?
9. What is the biggest opportunity presented by the corridor? Is there one big idea that should be captured in the master plan?
10. Are there particular themes or concepts that should be incorporated into the corridor's design? Are there different themes or concepts to consider for different sections of the corridor?
11. Is there an example of your idea anywhere in the world that you have seen or visited that you dream of this corridor resembling? What specific features, character elements, or experiences are special about it that you would like to include in this corridor?
12. In your opinion, what is/are the most important issue(s) to be addressed by the master plan? What is your/your organization's level of concern with this/these issue(s) (Low, Moderate, High)?
13. What other factors are you aware of that may affect the outcomes of the Master Plan (i.e. funding constraints, other City priorities, etc.)?

About staying involved

14. What are the best ways to keep you informed and involved during the master plan? Are there particular ways to effectively involve the community?
15. Do you plan on being involved throughout this process?
16. Are there other people/organizations you think we should talk to at this point in the planning process?
17. In your opinion, how should public input influence any decisions related to the Cross Kirkland Corridor Master Plan?
18. Is there anything else you think we should consider in the planning process?
19. Do you have any questions you'd like to ask us?