# III. General

## A. Plan Applicability and Consistency

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the guiding policy document to attain the City's vision of the future over the next 20 years or longer. This means that decisions and actions in the present are based on the adopted plan. One of the central tenets of the Growth Management Act is to require consistency in planning.

Consistency is determined in a number of ways. The following represent those areas where "consistency" must be achieved:

- The Comprehensive Plan must comply with the Growth Management Act.
- The Plan must be consistent with the Shoreline Management Act (adopted under the authority of Chapter 90.58 RCW and Chapter 173-26 WAC).
- The Plan is to be consistent with the regional plan – the multicounty planning policies adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in VISION 2040.
- It must be consistent with the adopted Countywide Planning Policies as well as coordinated with the plans of adjacent jurisdictions.
- State agencies and local governments must comply with the Comprehensive Plan.
- The various elements of the Comprehensive Plan must be internally consistent.

**VISION 2040 Regional Planning Statement**

The Comprehensive Plan has been updated based on residential and employment targets that align with VISION 2040. Residential and employment targets have also been identified for the entire city and for the designated regional growth center in Totem Lake. Through a development capacity analysis, the City determined that it has the land capacity and zoning in place to meet the City's assigned housing and employment targets for the year 2035.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses each of the policy areas in VISION 2040 that will make Kirkland livable, sustainable and connected. The plan advances a sustainable approach to growth and future development and incorporates a comprehensive approach to planning and decision-making.

- The Natural Environment Element *{Note chapter name may change}* contains policies that address maintaining, restoring and enhancing ecosystems through habitat protection, water conservation, and air

quality improvement. Environmentally friendly development techniques, such as low-impact landscaping, are also supported in the plan. Both the Natural Environment *{Note chapter name may change}* and Transportation Elements have policies to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to reduce Kirkland's impact on climate change. The plan includes provisions that strive to ensure that a healthy environment remains available for current and future generations.

- In response to other policies in VISION 2040, the Comprehensive Plan encourages more compact urban development and includes design guidelines for mixed-use, transit-oriented, walkable and bikeable development. The plan includes directives to prioritize funding and investments ~~in~~ in Totem Lake regional growth center.

- The City has established an affordable housing goal in the Housing Element for this planning period. The Housing Element commits to expanding housing production for all income levels to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents.

- The Economic Development Element supports a sustainable and environmentally friendly economy, diverse, livable wage jobs, and local innovative businesses.

- The Transportation Element advances cleaner and more sustainable mobility options with provisions for complete streets that include multi-modal improvements and streets integrated with low impact, green, context-sensitive design. The City supports programs and strategies that advance alternatives to driving alone. Transportation planning is coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions through the Bellevue Kirkland Redmond transportation forecast model. The City is committed to conservation methods in the provision of public services.

- The Public Services and Utilities Elements assure infrastructure and services that support existing and future residents and businesses with level of service standards and funding of projects to achieve these standards established in the Capital Facilities Element.

- The Community Character Element contains goals that protect and enhance our neighborhoods, overall local identity and historic resources.

- The Human Services Element has goals to support organizations and programs that provide for those in need, youth and seniors.

The Comprehensive Plan also addresses local implementation actions in VISION 2040, including identification of underused lands and development trends for the buildable lands report, tracking of housing and employment growth, implementation strategies for its goals and policies, and monitoring mode-split goals for the City's growth. In addition, the plan also addresses updating capital projects to ensure that provisions for adequate public facilities and services are consistent with Comprehensive Plan and VISION 2040.

**Implementing the Plan**

The City's legislative and administrative actions and decisions must be in compliance with the adopted plan. To accomplish these actions and decisions,~~this~~ a number of tasks need to be completed. The Implementation Strategies~~Measures~~ noted in Chapter XIV list those steps. As the City updates the plan, some of its development regulations may need to be revised to be consistent with and to implement the plan. The Zoning Map needs to be updated to be consistent with and implement the Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

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The Comprehensive Plan is the policy basis for the development regulations. The goals and policies in the plan themselves are not regulatory, but are general guiding principles. Development regulations are the tools to be used in reviewing development applications and must be consistent with the Plan. In instances when the regulations appear to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the regulations shall nonetheless govern. However, any inconsistencies must be resolved either by amending the regulations or revising the Plan.

Along with development regulations, t~~T~~he City may ~~has~~ use~~d~~ the Comprehensive Plan as the policy basis for decisions~~, particularly for~~ and determinations under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). ~~With this revised Comprehensive Plan adopted under the Growth Management Act,~~ Even so, the City has strived to integrate SEPA into the zoning permit review process as much as possible rather than using ~~having~~ a separate environmental review process. ~~The development regulations should provide clear and predictable guidance for issuing development permits and making SEPA determinations. However, where the regulations are not clear and/or discretion is to be exercised in making those development decisions, the Comprehensive Plan is to be used as the policy basis for those decisions.~~

The plan contains subarea plans for each neighborhood or business district. These subarea plans contain goals and policies important to each neighborhood. However, if there are conflicts or inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan Elements and a neighborhood plan, the general Plan Element goals and policies apply.

The Comprehensive Plan will also be used to guide the City in developing its Capital Improvement Program and in the preparation or update of the various functional plans and programs.

~~The City updates neighborhood plans on a cycle based on the age of the existing plan and the significance of land use changes in the neighborhood. If there are conflicts or inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan Elements and a neighborhood plan, the Plan Element goals and policies apply.~~

The goals of the General Element are as follows:

**Goal GP-1: Cooperate and coordinate with all levels of government to achieve effective, efficient, and responsive governance for Kirkland's citizens.**

**Goal GP-2: ~~To~~ P~~p~~romote active community participation in all levels of planning decisions.**

## B. Intergovernmental Coordination

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***Goal GP-1: Cooperate and coordinate with all levels of government to achieve effective, efficient, and responsive governance for Kirkland's citizens.***

***Policy GP-1.1: Update~~Prepare~~ the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in conformance with VISION 2040~~20~~ and with the Countywide Planning Policies for King County.***

VISION 2040~~20~~ is the long-range growth and transportation strategy for the central Puget Sound region encompassing King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The Countywide Planning Policies are required by the Growth Management Act to establish a framework to ensure that the city and county comprehensive plans are consistent.

~~***Policy GP-1.2: Actively participate with other jurisdictions in planning for issues of common regional or subregional interest.***~~

~~There are a number of formal and informal planning and coordination forums that the City participates in, including the Eastside Transportation Partnership, the Countywide technical forums and committees, and regional boards. The City should continue to be actively involved in these issues.~~

***Policy GP-1.~~3~~2: Work with adjacent jurisdictions and other governmental agencies to better coordinate on planning activities and development decisions, and in planning for issues of common regional or sub regional interest.***

The City participates in a number of formal and informal planning and coordination forums, including State Regional and Countywide technical forums, committees and boards. The City should continue to be actively involved in these issues.

While GMA requires that the comprehensive plans of adjacent jurisdictions be consistent, the City should continue to coordinate with Eastside cities and King County on a number of planning activities such as land use, housing~~ (ARCH)~~, transportation (traffic modeling, transit~~,~~ and commute trip reduction)~~,~~ ~~and land use~~, and human services.

The City should also seek ways to improve coordination and communication with affected agencies to avoid duplication of effort, increase efficiency, and gain a better understanding of mutual issues. This can be accomplished through such techniques as interlocal agreements and joint meetings, and by providing opportunities for notification, review, and comment on major plans, programs, or development projects.

***Policy GP-1.~~4~~3: Communicate Kirkland's land use policies and regulations to the King County Assessor's Office in order to ensure that assessment decisions do not conflict with land use decisions.***

As land use decisions are made, the City needs to coordinate with the Assessor's Office. This will ensure that they have the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding the City's land use.

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## C. Citizen Participation

The Growth Management Act establishes that cities shall have~~establish~~ procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive plans and regulations that implement these plans. The Comprehensive Plan is based on ~~has~~ involved community input and should continue to reflect the priorities and values of its residents and the business community.

***Goal GP-2: ~~To~~ P~~p~~romote active community participation in all levels of planning decisions.***

***Policy GP-2.1: Encourage public participation at the appropriate level in all planning processes and facilitate open communication between permit applicants and nearby residents and businesses ~~and neighbors~~ prior to the initiation of development actions.***

There are a number of opportunities for public involvement in the planning process whether it involves the Comprehensive Plan, the adoption of development regulations, or in the review of development permits. Public participation early on in the process can reduce conflicts and result in more responsive decisions.

It is critical that the public be involved in the early stages of the planning process, particularly in the development and adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. The goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the standards and requirements in the zoning and subdivision regulations, and shoreline master program provide the basis for individual review of development applications or the construction of public facilities. At the time of permit review, many of the basic land use issues have already been determined. Citizen input should focus on development standards and other site-specific issues.

***Policy GP-2.2: Utilize a broad range of public involvement techniques, ~~and~~ community forums and communications to ensure that opportunities exist for all public views to be heard.***

Kirkland has utilized a number of techniques and procedures to ensure a wide range of participatory public involvement at the appropriate level. Some examples that are being used today and should continue are:

- Mailing, ~~and~~ emailing, including use of listservs, and posting of notices to parties that may be affected by planning decisions;
- Notifying neighborhood, condominium and business associations, interested organizations and affected agencies.
- Creating and maintaining web and social media sites that provide information about plans and project;

- Offering interactive web forums around issues;
- Hosting ~~Early~~ neighborhood meetings by applicants for development permits early in the process;
- Using citizen advisory commissions and focus groups to oversee the planning process;
- Using a broad range of media to inform citizens of planning activities;
- Holding public workshops, open houses, community conversations and discussion groups; and
- Providing opportunities for reconsideration or appeal of decisions~~; and~~.
- ~~Notifying neighborhood, condominium and business associations, interested organizations and affected agencies.~~

In the future, other techniques should be explored as appropriate to ensure strong public involvement.

***Policy GP-2.3: Work closely with community groups, neighborhood associations, business organizations, and service clubs.***

The City encourages the formation of neighborhood associations and business forums. These types of organizations are an important part of the community's identity and character. The City should look for opportunities to involve these groups in decisions that affect them.

***Policy GP-2.4: Encourage active citizen participation in the planning and design of public facilities, particularly in affected neighborhoods~~, communities,~~ and business areas.***

Many of the decisions on public facilities have significant issues that need to be addressed such as access, safety, environmental concerns, neighborhood character, and economic impacts. In the planning and design of public facilities it is important to have a process that facilitates public involvement by all parties.

## D. PLAN AMENDMENT

### *Amendment Process*

The Growth Management Act specifies that the Comprehensive Plan~~ and Land Use Plan Map~~ may~~can~~ only be amended once a year, except for certain actions listed in Section 365-196-640 of the Washington Administrative

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Code, including amendments to the Capital Facilities Element that is part of adoption of the City budget. in emergencies. Section 365-195-630 of the Washington Administrative Code states that all Aamendments are to in any year be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of the various proposals can be ascertained. The intent of this requirement is to ensure that piecemeal or individual amendments do not erode the integrity of the plan and are integrated and consistent with the balance of the Plan. The Zoning Code contains the process for an emergency amendment.

The City generally reviews the Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis. Revisions are made to the Transportation and Capital Facilities Elements to update information and projects based on the City's Capital Improvement Program, and to all of the elements in response to amendments to the Growth Management Act and other State legislation or Countywide planning policies. Amendments are also made to correct any inconsistencies in the plan, to reflect any recently adopted functional plan, and to update general information.

Amendments are initiated in two ways: by the City or by a citizen or community group. A formal process to amend the plan, consistent with the requirements of the Growth Management Act, has been established. The process for the City-initiated and citizen-initiated amendments include opportunities for public involvement and community participation. The Kirkland Planning Commission is a citizen board selected by the City Council that advises the City Council on matters relating to the Comprehensive Plan and land use regulations. The commission takes the lead role for reviewing plan and code amendments as the City's citizen representative body and is responsible for conducting study sessions and the public hearing, and then transmitting a recommendation to the City Council. The Houghton Community Council, Kirkland Transportation Commission and Park Board also may take public comment on for amendment proposals within their jurisdiction and transmit recommendations to the Planning Commission and to the City Council. The Zoning Code contains the process for reviewing and deciding upon a proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

Amendments are initiated in two ways: by the City or by a citizen, business or community group. A formal process to amend the plan, consistent with the requirements of the Growth Management Act, has been established. The Zoning Code contains evaluation criteria and process for reviewing and deciding upon a proposal. The process includes opportunities for public involvement and community participation. For citizen-initiated proposals, the City has a formal application process and an established deadline for submitting an application to be considered in the next round of City-initiated plan amendments. The City has a two-step process for citizen-initiated plan amendments: first a threshold determination and then a study and final decision on the proposed amendments. For City-initiated plan amendments, the City has only one step: the study and final decision on the proposed amendments. The Zoning Code contains the criteria for evaluating a proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan.

The City reviews the Comprehensive Plan on an annual basisto update the Transportation and Capital Facilities Elements or any other element for any needed changes, to respond to amendments to the Growth Management Act and other State legislation or Countywide planning policies, to correct any inconsistencies in the Plan and with the development regulations and any recently adopted functional plan, and to update general information.

The City amends establishes a schedule for amending the neighborhood plans as needed and when possible given and reviews the schedule each year as part of the Planning Department's work program and, City Council priorities. In addition, the City considers citizen-initiated amendment requests generally on a biannual basis and incorporates these into the annual plan amendment process. Citizen amendment requests may either be for general amendments or for a change to the land use map and/or text change relating to a specific property or a general area.