



October 19, 2013 Community Planning Day Citizen Comments

The following are citizen comments received in group discussions at the Visioning Sessions. Discussion questions were about Land Use, Housing, Community Character, Economic Development, Environmental Stewardship, and Transportation. Some participants submitted written comments on postcards. These are summarized after the discussion group comments.

Land Use -

Where and how should growth occur in the City? (Dispersed vs. concentrated?)

- Along Juanita Drive
- In Finn Hill
- In South Rose Hill and Bridle Trails
- Provide smaller housing units – accessory dwelling units, mother-in-law units
- In Totem Lake – design like Juanita Village near transit, smaller housing units, anchor store
- At Park Place – Larger grocery store, offices, condos, apartments, theater... Develop what was planned.
- In Totem Lake buildings could be increased in height to 30-40 stories
- Along Cross Kirkland Corridor
- Plan for better traffic movement where we plan for growth
- Maintain quality of downtown (small town – not too high rise!)
- Concentrate growth in Totem Lake, Juanita & Rose Hill – in high rise buildings
- Change is good – allow more high rise, mixed use along CKC and some in downtown
- Disperse growth throughout City
- Realize Kirkland will be more developed in 2035
- Quantify what “high rise” means: not TOO high – need to know your neighbors
- Juanita could allow taller buildings
- Ensure good quality development – Kirkland has a good design review process
- Transit-Oriented-Development works to provide infrastructure and more density
- Need to get Park Place project going (starting to look deserted like Totem Lake)
- Downtown has too much traffic to enjoy it
- Need more retail stores in Kirkland so don't have to go to Bellevue (then people will come)
- Downtown Kirkland needs more diversity in the types of businesses (too many hair salons- rents are too high)
- Encourage employment within neighborhood commercial districts to walk, use transit, designed to be walkable like Juanita Village
- Increase small businesses & home businesses (not only in concentrated office buildings)

In 2035, what should neighborhood business districts look like? What should they contain? (Specific services, amenities, aesthetics?)

- Park Place needs another parking garage
- Increase the parking garage in downtown across from transit center.
- Downtown doesn't need more businesses because there are many vacant store fronts
- Mixed use

- Development reflects the neighborhood design
- Innovative design
- No big box stores in neighborhood business districts
- Provide a variety of building height
- Buildings provide open space along street
- Should contain grocery stores, drug stores, bank, coffee shop
- Technology may change how we shop
- Market demand will determine what is built

Many people want to see the *Totem Lake shopping center* redeveloped. *What other changes might make Totem Lake a more appealing place to live, work and visit?*

- Improve Trader Joe's vehicular access
- Encourage redevelopment of Totem Lake Mall
- Improve attractiveness of area
- Improve traffic management
- Improve transit access; provide local transit service or street car
- Provide a regional, open air, shopping mall
- Provide a Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) connections

Housing -

We may have up to 8,000 new housing units by 2035. *In your neighborhood, what types of housing should we try to encourage?*

- Innovative housing such as cottage housing
- Small housing
- Artist housing
- In- fill with townhouses, apartments, condos
- Balance infill housing while preserving views
- Affordable housing in a variety of styles condos, apartments, townhomes
- Higher density housing designed with open space or small parks that serve as gathering places
- Neighborhood corners provide gathering places – “third place”
- Locate high density housing around SR 520 in southern Kirkland
- Locate housing near transportation centers
- Locate high density housing along CKC (Redmond Riverside Development)
- Gentrification reduces housing affordability.
- Allow high rise in some neighborhoods where it will fit in
- Provide single family houses for families with kids
- Smaller housing for seniors and first time homeowners
- Variety of affordable housing options
- Residential suites (1 bedroom) if there is adequate parking and community spaces
- Transit Oriented Development where there is transit and services
- Demographic trends will influence the type of housing needed and transportation systems
- Smaller, more density housing is okay if well designed and quality construction
- Need diverse jobs and higher paying jobs
- Need senior housing near bus, shops and entertainment
- Along Market Street on transit line support 3-4 stories designed like shipyard housing
- In Houghton support smaller lots, smaller houses, cottage housing and mixed use housing in shopping center
- In Finn Hill now there are ugly houses and do not like the 6-story apt on the water; in the future increase more green housing

- In Bridle Trails support redevelopment and innovative project
- In Downtown design taller buildings to have adequate separation and position of windows for privacy and provide 2 story buildings along the water while providing view of water

Think about housing for lower to middle income people (income not greater than 50% of median household income for King County). What types of housing should it be? Where should it be located?

- Requiring a percentage of housing units to be affordable works! Do not segregate
- Add housing at schools for teachers

Community Character -

The Vision Statement in the Comprehensive Plan refers to Kirkland as having a small town feel. What does “small town feel” mean to you?

(Characteristics to retain in future, how to grow gracefully while keeping small town feel?)

- Downtown Kirkland
- Main street
- Neighborhood commercial areas are a collection of villages with their unique feel and character like Juanita and connected together throughout the city
- Relaxed feeling; safe
- Sufficient commercial stores
- A place to live & work
- Reduced car use and increased transportation options
- Accommodate growth in Totem Lake
- Increase parking downtown
- Accommodate housing for both living and working and walking to shops and services
- Walkability
- Comfortable human scale sized buildings – not too big
- Wide sidewalks
- Sense of community
- Mixed generations of people
- Easy to park to stop and shop
- Why grow? City needs to protect its citizens
- Small town feel is fading – not as attractive of city
- No cookie-cutter development
- Traffic in and out of town is horrible – streets can’t accommodate number of cars
- Need better transit systems
- Do not shop downtown because it is too congested
- Maintain indoor Juanita High School pool
- Update neighborhood community centers in each neighborhood
- Form neighborhood watches
- Kirkland is a small city; not a small town
- Provide affordable housing for families
- Each neighborhood commercial area is unique
- City of volunteers
- Do need greater urban density
- Small town concept has to do with design

- Where density occurs should serve the larger community as a whole (Houghton/Everest BD for example)
- Locate density near transit centers and freeways
- Building height is 2-3 stories with upper story setbacks and setbacks from the street for open space, trees and sustainably built.
- Maintain the parks and waterfront parks
- Concern about growth of neighborhood drives zoning changes

Economic Development –

What types of jobs and businesses should Kirkland try to attract in the future?

(More high tech, retail, office? Other? Light manufacturing?)

- Medical/high tech equals better paying jobs
- Need affordable housing for the medical and high tech employees
- Close jobs equals less traffic
- Walking and biking to work is preferred
- Live, work and consume in the same community
- Provide shops close to jobs e.g. grocery store
- Attract shoppers from out of Kirkland
- Need some anchor retail e.g. Target
- Business park at Totem Lake & Parmac – e.g. Canyon Creek in Bothell – traffic free
- No transportation dependent businesses (trucking)
- Work from home opportunities
- Focus on infrastructure (connectivity, transportation, parks) and business will come
- Provide underground parking with amenities e.g. El Camino Real from Palo Alto to Santa Clara – arts & culture programming in development or outdoor pianos in Boston
- No Walmart!
- Local businesses and unique retail that supports each other
- Infrastructure for innovation (for startups) e.g. incubator space, "maker space" - the City makes this available for startup businesses (high speed fiber). Chamber of Commerce is working on this
- Small scale; leading edge businesses

Quality of life and community image bring businesses to Kirkland. What do you think are these important qualities and community image?

- Kirkland is not just a bedroom community
- Mom & Pop businesses are still needed
- Learning community from birth to death
- Encourage the arts
- Well educated children e.g. Kalamazoo Promise
- Kirkland Performance Center is more accessible to Kirkland Arts
- Zoning is more flexible to allow a broader range of uses
- Develop living & arts lofts near the Kirk Arts Center
- Encourage an overall arts strategy

Is it important to you to have a local shopping center near your home? If yes, what type of shops and services?

- Must be walkable
- Town center with expanded shops

- Neighborhood needs just grocery and a few restaurants, e.g. Crossroads (indoor area) – grocery stores, clothing shops, hardware stores, bookstores, variety stores, gathering places “3rd Place”
- Kirkland has a nice downtown
- Juanita Village could be replicated but each must have unique character
- Locally-owned businesses
- Gathering place
- Bridle Trails good example (also Lake Forest Park)
- Finn Hill needs a local shopping center like the above

What if anything should be changes in the local shopping center near to your home? (Renovated? How? Add housing above retail and offices?)

- Keep Trader Joe’s
- Houghton not bad but nothing after 8 or 9 pm and nothing to draw community

Environmental Stewardship –

What does it mean to be a green or sustainable community?
(Energy efficiency? Recycling? Alternative transportation?)

Environment

- Activity level is below impact level
- Use localized resources
- No-wake zone on lake (for paddle boarding)
- Wise use of resources
- Protect sensitive areas, wetlands and streams
- More natural pathways on shoreline and wetlands to maintain area
- Have "pothole reporting" for park environmental issues
- Balance

Recycling

- Continue education, make it easier to do, provide at parks and multi family
- Profit motive for disposable vs. sustainable
- Minimize water use to clean recyclables
- More apples to feed deer
- Encourage water to be kept on-site

Transportation

- Maximize alternative transportation options: bike trails and lanes in streets, mass transit, rail, pedestrian walkway connections with lighting (1/2 mile radius is walkable),
- School buses are redundant to public transit system
- Separate walking and biking on street from traffic
- Rent-a-bike
- Covered bus shelters - community/volunteer built
- Transit zone around downtown

Community Development- Design

- Multi-family housing with green space on site and privacy between units with adequate parking and near transportation centers
- Smarter buildings that use solar, reuse water, low-impact development
- More "village" type development

- Preserve green areas; provide green spaces
- Identify right place for affordable housing
- Healthy mix of business and consumer needs
- Permeable sidewalk materials
- Rain gardens
- Street trees - carefully planted
- Build density around transit and businesses
- Live close to work - office & residence at one location or close
- Close-in, local services
- Mixed use e.g: downtown Vancouver BC w/big box wrapped at street level with other retail and condos on top plus parking
- Net zero
- Village concept of living
- Jobs closer to home
- Build to allow for future use
- Create zoning more mixed use to encourage alternate transportation use
- Allow greater density in some areas and allow less elsewhere

Government support and policy

- Clear community standards
- Fiscal and environmental resources need to be sustainable; government looks long term
- Setting limits but be flexible to reflect technological advances (code)
- Financial independence
- Objective evaluations- Categories 1) Healthy and 2) Infrastructure - bring in new, anticipate inevitable
- Can young people afford current vision?
- Have businesses that want to come and stay
- Well-planned Green spaces - may need to be flexible to allow development
- Provide community gardens at Transfer Station
- Community gardens closer to multi family
- Allow extra height for vegetable gardens
- Increase natural source of energy use
- Incentives for solar
- Limit impacts of solar size
- Loss of Transfer Station will make recycling harder
- Provide city-wide recycling center at maintenance center

Transportation –

In your transportation vision for Kirkland in 2035, what would you see? What are your expectations? What will it look like? Describe as specifically as possible. Do you see much change from now?

(More frequent buses and route? Other new modes? Dedicated lanes for each mode? More bike lanes? Pedestrian paths?)

What works best now?

- Cars, feet, bus
- Walking
- Good balance now
- Bike for recreation
- Bus to Seattle (to downtown core)
- Car
- Park & Ride
- Bike up to 5 miles

Vision for future:

- Fewer cars
- Streets dedicated to bike and pedestrians
- Improve public transit with more buses, park and rides and shuttles
- Light Rail
- Rapid transit; Commuter train to Seattle
- Better choice of local-owned stores in Kirkland
- Safe walking in dark
- Infrastructure for seamless travel : “KNOW AND GO”
- Bike elevators for hills
- Smaller buses to neighborhoods and improve service
- Jet packs & "beam me up"
- Smaller cars
- Light rail across bridges with bus connections
- Tolls on I90 & I405 (Rebates for low-income households on tolls)
- Bike-friendly transit; Bike shuttle
- Grocery stores and services that are close
- Keep transit off Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC)
- Walking
- Intercity shuttle
- Connections to CKC (safe access & parking)
- Connections over freeway
- Protected & buffered bicycling trails & paths
- Need transit that comes often (5-10 min)
- Need transit close to jobs/homes
- Need buses that run often and on schedule
- Need close access to bus stops
- Transfers discourage bus riders
- Land use that supports mass transit
- Separation between highway, roads, transit and bikes
- Buses are mostly empty - need taxation to change, pay by demand
- Provide small bus on CKC
- Easy access to bus

- Walkability and access to trails
- Van-size or shuttle transit for neighborhood access
- Regional (bus) service connecting Kirkland to light rail
- Use (smart tech phones) to link to bus/transit availability
- Moving walkways
- Water taxi to link Kirkland to Seattle and communities within Kirkland
- Check at neighborhood level to determine needs
- Need good connection to 520 bike trail
- Connect CKC trail to Finn Hill//Evergreen Hill/Kingsgate and westward
- Greenway map to have neighborhood identify bike/pedestrian pathways
- Bike trails allow scooters for older persons
- Bike share program:
 - Have ability to carry groceries on bike
 - Better designed trike for seniors
 - Motor on bike for going up hill
 - Motorized 4-wheel bike
- CKC should remain a trail only with no light rail

In 2010, 13% of the U.S. population was 65 years and older. By 2035, in the U.S. at least 1 in 4 people will be over the age of 65 with many people living past 80. How will the increase in the senior population influence how people get around? How will this change our transportation priorities in the future?

- Bus doesn't work
- Public transit is a huge barrier
- Provide community based transit system within Kirkland; density makes this more feasible
- Weather is a barrier; can't walk/bike at night
- If distance over 5 miles you drive (another person says 1 mile)
- Hills are a barrier if you have cargo
- Location – can you walk to the store
- Biking is bad here – need lanes, better signals, hill are a barrier, grocery needs to be nearby (1/4 mile max)
- Want to access 4-5 errands from one parking spot
- Must have access to CKC from public transit
- CKC trail must have public transit ON it
- Need better access to the CKC trail
- Steep hills off the CKC trail in Houghton make access difficult
- More "village" type development
- Shuttles
- More buses
- Make walk/bike/bus easier to use

Citizen comments shared on suggestion/comment postcards at Planning Day, categorized into topic areas:

Land Use-Where and how growth should occur:

- Move major urban growth to Totem Lake (high rises) with Sound Transit extension and high quality construction
- Parks on top with amenities and parking underground (ex. Microsoft campus)
- Take pressure off Downtown - minimize future mid & high rises there, provide more transit to get car traffic out of downtown
- Each neighborhood : small gathering commercial centers , 3 stories, with local businesses (ex. Juanita Village, Crossroads Mall indoors, but better), multi-generational gathering day/nights, covered & heated
- Along corridor add retail/mixed use zoning i.e. Kirkland Way
- Growth management to control urban sprawl
- Big-box stores should have condos above, parking below, & retail wrapped

Totem Lake:

- West of Evergreen Hospital - add mixed use residential/office/retail
- Par Mac - add retail/office
- Concerns about traffic at 116th & Slater - poor ingress/egress with new project
- Totem Lake Mall - height should be allowed to be increased
- Consider more housing in Totem Lake
- Challenges to pedestrians and bikes
 - 132nd PI NE up from NE 124th
 - 120th to Evergreen Hospital campus
 - Very poor bike access to Evergreen Hospital in vicinity of Transit Center
- Totem Lake Mall area traffic flow has always been a problem. Suggest making 120th Ave all one-way northbound (3 lanes). Get rid of many left turn traffic congestion & keeps 3 lanes directly up to Evergreen Health.
- Totem Lake Mall - change out to Canyon Creek type area

Housing comments:

- Concerned that single-family homes will be phased out of downtown. Specifically, older homes being demolished for very expensive homes or multi-family/condos. Would like to live in Downtown in something other than a condo.

Community Character comments:

- Arts & culture as base theme throughout our entire city
- Close streets & create piazzas (plazas for pedestrians) & parks
- Enhance safety
- Initiate neighborhood watch programs

Economic Development comments:

- Bridle Trails Shopping Center:
 - Residents like lots of open space there, almost rural feel
 - Residents do NOT want multi-story development up to sidewalks
 - Do NOT want creation of parking problem from increased apartments/retail with insufficient parking
- Have more retail in neighborhoods so residents can walk to grocery, drug store etc
- Neighborhood /community athletic center (pool, BB court, gym)

Environmental Stewardship comments:

- Be careful about being overzealous with Green Building: 1/4 of people will be over 50; older people need 3 times more light than 20-yr-olds, cannot see well if light is spotty or glaring
- Conserve water use
- Save and promote green open space
- Street trees & street garden & rain garden requirements should be a part of every new development and re-development.
- Change Public Works CIP work-flow so that Parks & Water Management must look at every project in order to see where forces can be combined.

Transportation comments:

- CKC should remain a trail only with no light rail
- Put 116th over corridor as a main N-S way
- Business should be clustered to reduce necessity of travel to run errands such as grocery shopping
- Provide for future transit stations at Houghton, Downtown, Totem Lake (TOD)
 - How will the stations be connected to adjacent areas?]
 - What about land use adjacent to stations?
- Bike share
- Look at improving transit BEFORE trying to change zoning that will result in more traffic congestion, e.g. potential rezone of Houghton/Everest neighborhood center with no possibility of additional lanes
- If feasible as congestion grows, have city-wide shuttles that pick up throughout the neighborhoods.
- Density bonuses offered to developers around transit centers
- Transit centers need to be more convenient to business centers (i.e. NOT on the freeway) and should be convenient & comfortable
- Traffic strategies for most congested areas