

# XII.B. HUMAN SERVICES



CHARTING A FUTURE COURSE

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## ◆ RELATIONSHIP TO THE FRAMEWORK GOALS ◆

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The **Human Services Element** highlights the following Framework Goals:

- FG-1 Maintain and enhance Kirkland's unique character.
- ✓ **FG-2 Support a strong sense of community.**
- FG-3 Maintain vibrant and stable residential neighborhoods and mixed-use development, with housing for diverse incomes, ages, and lifestyles.
- FG-4 Promote a strong and diverse economy.
- FG-5 Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a healthy environment.
- FG-6 Identify, protect and preserve the City's historic resources, and enhance the identity of those areas and neighborhoods in which they exist.
- FG-7 Encourage a sustainable community.
- FG-8 Maintain and enhance Kirkland's strong physical, visual, and perceptual linkages to Lake Washington.
- FG-9 Provide safety and accessibility for those who use alternative modes of transportation within and between neighborhoods, public spaces, and business districts and to regional facilities.
- FG-10 Create a transportation system which allows the mobility of people and goods by providing a variety of transportation options.
- FG-11 Maintain existing park facilities, while seeking opportunities to expand and enhance the current range and quality of facilities.
- FG-12 Ensure public safety.
- FG-13 Maintain existing adopted levels of service for important public facilities.
- FG-14 Plan for a fair share of regional growth, consistent with State and regional goals to minimize low-density sprawl and direct growth to urban areas.
- ✓ **FG-15 Solve regional problems that affect Kirkland through regional coordination and partnerships.**
- ✓ **FG-16 Promote active citizen involvement and outreach education in development decisions and planning for Kirkland's future.**
- FG-17 Establish development regulations that are fair and predictable.

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### A. INTRODUCTION

The Human Services Element seeks to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in the community, regardless of race, nationality, creed, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender or age. The City recognizes that each person needs to have a sense of belonging, support in their community, and have access to opportunities that contribute to healthy development. The City has made a commitment to providing services and programs to those considered more vulnerable and/or at risk, including youth, seniors, and those with financial need, special needs and disabilities. The Human Services, Senior Services, and Youth Services Programs are all housed within the Parks and Community Services Department.

The challenges now and in the future are how to serve the increasing senior population, provide support to teens and their parents and meet the growing basic needs of low- and moderate-income residents. Forecasts for the future indicate that one in four residents in the Puget Sound area will be over the age of 65 in 2022. To be able to continue residing in the community, many of these residents will need support services along with affordable housing or housing that accommodates seniors as they age, such as assisted living facilities, mother-in-law apartments and smaller one-story homes. As the community's population grows so will the number of low- to moderate-income residents needing food, shelter, clothing, and support services. Youth will continue to need support programs and positive leisure activities to help them become competent and responsible members of the community.

In addition, our community continues to be enriched with people from different countries and ethnic backgrounds. Human service programs need to be responsive to the variety of cultures and languages that exist now and in the future.

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

#### **Youth Services**

The Youth Services Program is part of the City's Community Services Division of the Parks and Community Services Department run by the Youth Services Staff with support from the Kirkland Youth Council.

The Kirkland Youth Council, established in 1996, is an advisory board to the City Council representing the youth in the community. In addition, the Youth Council provides communication between the City Council, Lake Washington School District, community-based groups, schools, and service organizations. Kirkland Youth Council members represent Kirkland locally, nationally, and internationally at summits and conferences.

The City of Kirkland works in partnership with community agencies to provide information and services to Kirkland youth and families. Because of the many immigrant and refugee families living in Kirkland and attending Kirkland schools, City and school-linked support programs have been established.

In 2001, the Teen Union Building, located on the perimeter of Peter Kirk Park next to the Senior Center, was established. It provides a social, educational, recreational and leadership center for youth. The programs at the facility provide a gateway to volunteer activities and jobs in the community.

#### **Senior Services**

The Peter Kirk Community Center provides opportunities for people age 50 and over to have healthy and rewarding lives and to participate in community events. To achieve the goal of promoting wellness of body, mind and spirit, the Center offers a wide variety of fitness, art and lifelong learning classes, in addition to health, legal and financial services.

The Kirkland Senior Council, established in 2002, is an advisory board to the City Council representing residents 50 years and older. The Senior Council prioritizes and works to implement the Senior Services

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Strategic Plan and makes recommendations to the City Council.

### Human Services

Demographic, economic and social changes have had an impact in Kirkland. These changes have dramatically increased the need for health and human services. The City's Human Service Policy established a separate program within the Parks and Community Services Department. Human Services Staff is primarily responsible for the planning and administration of the City's human services program. The City's role in human services is as a partner, funder, facilitator, and coordinator, but not a direct provider of human services. The Human Services Advisory Committee, established in 1986, serves as a committee to advise the City Council on allocation of the City's General Funds for human services.

#### *RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS*

The Human Services Element is one of the elements that implements Framework Goal FG-2 by establishing goals and policies that provide programs to assist those in need and enrichment opportunities to encourage a healthy community. In addition, the Human Services Element supports the Framework Goal FG-12 by supporting the establishment of citizen boards for youth, seniors and human service representatives.

The Human Services Element supports the Housing Element by establishing policies to provide assistance to those in need of housing and to encourage construction of housing appropriate for seniors, the disabled and the disadvantaged. The Human Services Element also establishes policies to allocate City funds to non-profit organizations providing affordable housing.

The Human Services Element supports the Transportation Element by encouraging better access for seniors and youth who often rely on safe pedestrian connections and public transit to move about the community. In addition, the Human Services Element supports the Public Service Element with policies that maintain the quality of life by helping those in need and by coordinating with local social services agen-

cies to provide assistance to Kirkland residents. Lastly, the policies in the Human Services Element support the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Element with policies that ensure that programs are offered for seniors, youth and the disadvantaged.

### B. HUMAN SERVICES CONCEPT

The Human Services Element goals and policies broadly define the City's role in contributing to the social development of the community. This element supports the provision of services that are utilized by those considered more vulnerable and/or at risk, including youth, seniors, and those in need. This Element represents those services that seek to enhance the quality of life for citizens of the community.

### C. HUMAN SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal HS-1: Build a community in which families, neighbors, schools, and organizations all work together to help young people to become happy, competent and responsible members of the community.**

**Goal HS-2: Maintain and improve the quality of life for Kirkland residents 50 years and older.**

**Goal HS-3: Provide funds to nonprofit human service providers to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents.**

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*Goal HS-1: Build a community in which families, neighbors, schools, and organizations all work together to help young people to become happy, competent and responsible members of the community.*

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*Policy HS-1.1: Maintain and support the Kirkland Youth Council.*

The Youth Council provides an important link between the youth of Kirkland, the government, school

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district and the community. The Council's ideas, programs, and professionalism have been recognized as creative, intuitive, and successful in connecting with the youth in the community. Their continued work with the Teen Union Building, the Skate Park, other youth facilities, and the City's Boards and Commissions should be supported and encouraged.

***Policy HS-1.2: Coordinate with the Kirkland Teen Union Building to provide a safe place for the youth and recreational/educational activities and social programming.***

The Teen Union Building provides a safe place for teens to spend their time and to learn, socialize and recreate. With the support of the Kirkland Youth Council and nonprofit organizations serving East King County youth, the City should continue to support the Teen Union Building, its staff and programs to provide a safe and rewarding environment for the youth in the community.

***Policy HS-1.3: Provide connections between Kirkland youth and their community by partnering with the City, school district and local youth-serving agencies.***

The City of Kirkland values its partnership with the Lake Washington School District in helping to connect youth to their community. Seeking out grant opportunities to provide more school and community programs for youth should continue. Through the Youth Council, open lines of communication should continue to be a priority between the school district and the City. The Youth Council should also continue their goal of connecting students to their community with youth summits, Citywide events and school activities.

***Policy HS-1.4: Provide access to information and services for Kirkland youth and their families on employment, social services, safety issues and classes for parents of teens.***

The City of Kirkland appreciates the importance of partnering with community agencies to provide information and services to Kirkland youth and families. Partnerships with nonprofit organizations, the Lake

Washington School District and the City are crucial in helping to provide programs for youth and families and should be a priority. The City of Kirkland, in partnership with the Kirkland Teen Union Building, should either provide or find and advertise free or low-cost accessible parenting classes and support services for parents of teens and preteens.

Teens and youth safety is a continual concern. Accidents are the number one killer of teens, with car accidents leading the list and drowning second. Teens do not always take the necessary precautions when driving, boating, swimming and biking. Youth Services should encourage continued education on water, bicycle and seat belt safety, and not using alcohol or drugs when driving a car. This information should be provided through schools, the Teen Union Building, the Fire and Police Departments, and the community.

Many youth ages 13 to 15 have few summer employment opportunities. The City should continue to explore employment and intern options for teens, partnering with the Kirkland Teen Union Building and the business community. In addition, the City's Youth Services should support and help provide volunteer opportunities for Kirkland youth.

In addition, many youth do not drive or own vehicles so they depend on public transportation or safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to get to their activities. The City should work with the regional transit provider to see that the convenient and low-cost public transportation is provided through the City. A system of safe nonmotorized connections should also be provided from neighborhoods to business centers and public facilities as outlined in the Transportation Element.

***Policy HS-1.5: Promote healthy lifestyles.***

Leisure time activities enrich lives, prevent social isolation and increase a sense of belonging to the community, as well as offer positive choices for how youth spend their time. Obesity issues, lack of exercise, eating disorders, and poor diet are problems that teens face. Many teens spend hours after school watching television, playing video games, and surfing the web. Providing positive recreational activities en-

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courages lifelong learning for teens, provides fitness opportunities and promotes healthy lifestyles. Through Kirkland's partnership with the Teen Union Building, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, the City should help to provide recreational and leisure time activities for youth.

***Policy HS-1.6: Establish positive relationships between the youth and Kirkland Police.***

A goal of the Kirkland Youth Council and the City of Kirkland is to improve the relationship between youth and police. One way that this has been accomplished is by development of the Respect Manual, a manual to answer questions, reduce fear and increase understanding between the youth and Kirkland Police. The Kirkland Youth Council and the Police Department should continue to explore other ways in which to build positive relationships with the City and youth in the community.

***Policy HS-1.7: Support programs working to lower youth violence, substance abuse, depression and suicide in the community.***

City programs, such as Summer Youth Outreach Specialists, help to maintain positive relationships with community youth, referring youth to services and preventing risky behavior by youth. Such programs have reduced negative police and youth interactions. Efforts are focused on working with the youth at local parks, beaches and the Teen Union Building after school, on weekends and during the summer when the youth have more free time and thus may get involved with risky behavior.

The City's Youth Services should continue to work to support youth access to after-school, weekend and summer development programs to help shut down the "prime time juvenile crime" and encourage positive and healthy behavior. This encouragement should help diffuse the harassing behavior found in many of our schools. In addition, Youth Services should also continue supporting Kirkland's school and community drug/alcohol/tobacco and teen depression and suicide programs to help develop healthy and responsible youth.

The Police Department works with the Lake Washington School District to lower the number of youth who are using drug/alcohol/tobacco through partnerships, such as the School Resource Officers. The City should continue the Police Department's partnership with the school district to develop and support the drug/alcohol/tobacco use prevention programs.

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***Goal HS-2: Maintain and improve the quality of life for Kirkland residents 50 years and older.***

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***Policy HS-2.1: Maintain and support the Senior Council.***

The City is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of life of residents 50 years and older in Kirkland. Recognizing the value and contributions residents 50 years and older bring to our community, the Kirkland Senior Council's mission is to preserve and improve the quality of life for Kirkland residents 50 years and older by identifying their concerns, advocating for their needs and creating programs that advance their well-being. The Senior Council offers people the opportunity to directly participate in the advocacy and creation of programs that meet their needs. The City should maintain the Senior Council and support its programs.

***Policy HS-2.2: Provide opportunities for people 50 years and older to be active, connected, and engaged in learning.***

Aging has changed. People 50 years and older are much more active now and thus prefer a wider range of recreational programs and services than in the past. The activities older adults desire as part of their life in the community include working, recreation, lifelong learning, and social engagement. Recognizing this, the Peter Kirk Community Center should provide a broad range of activities, classes and services for residents 50 and older, a resource for information and referral of activities, events and services for older adults and adult children seeking assistance, and services for their aging parent. Through a joint use agreement with the Teen Union Building, people 50 and older should continue to have the opportunity to take com-

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puter classes provided in the Teen Union Building computer lab. The City should also continue to provide information via a comprehensive activity brochure mailed out to residents and the City's web page with links to important services throughout King County.

The City engages in partnerships with other community organizations and businesses to increase program opportunities and locations, provide greater marketing abilities and promote a sense of community relationship. These partnerships should continue and increase as the number of people 50 years and older increase.

***Policy HS-2.3: Provide access to information, resources, services and programs for older adults.***

Older adults, their caregivers and family members often do not know where to turn for help, do not believe it is right to ask for help or feel guilty about taking advantage of available services. Many older adults and their adult children lack knowledge about in-home services, assisted living options, and the steps between living in their own homes and moving into retirement, assisted living or nursing homes.

The Parks and Community Services Department should continue to utilize various sources to provide older adults with information about programs and services, including brochures, the City's web page and TV cable station, local media and other organizations' newsletters.

The challenges are compounded for the non-English speaking seniors and their families. Many of these older adults are isolated, with little or no contact outside their homes or their children. The Parks and Community Services Department should continue partnerships with agencies to offer programs and services with some bilingual staff, so that non-English speaking older adults have the opportunity to participate in social, recreational and educational activities and meals. Traditional program components such as outreach, advocacy and greater access to services should also be provided for these non-English speaking older adults.

In addition, many older adults do not drive or own vehicles so they depend on public transportation or safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to get them to their activities, shopping and medical appointments. The City should work with the regional transit provider to see that the convenient and low-cost public transportation is provided through the City. A system of safe nonmotorized connections should also be provided from neighborhoods to business centers and public facilities as outlined in the Transportation Element.

***Policy HS-2.4: Maintain a safe environment for older adults in the community.***

Feeling secure, both about safety of physical access and safety in terms of crime, is important to older adults. Older adults have identified the need for safe access to community facilities, parks and bike paths, visible law enforcement, and emergency responsiveness from both police and emergency medical services.

The City should encourage partnership programs with various local agencies, such as the Gatekeeper program, to notify specified individuals when seniors fail to pick up their mail or newspapers, or when unattended problems are noticed at the home.

The Kirkland Police Department, the Kirkland Teen Union Building and City's Youth Services have been working on a plan to increase security around the Peter Kirk Community Center and the adjoining Teen Union Building and Peter Kirk Park. The City should continue an ongoing dialogue to assure older adults that the City is committed to keeping the Downtown area safe. In addition, the Peter Kirk Community Center should continue to offer a variety of personal safety programs.

***Policy HS-2.5: Encourage affordable and appropriately designed older adult housing.***

Affordable and appropriately designed housing are key issues for older adults in terms of what it will take for them to remain in Kirkland as they age. The City should support public and private efforts to create and preserve affordable housing in Kirkland, particularly

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housing for older adults, such as mother-in-law apartments, shared housing, small lots, cottages and one-story homes accessible to the disabled and elderly. Universal design principles that meet the needs of as many users as possible and at many different stages of life should be encouraged.

In exploring options for affordable housing for seniors, the City should utilize the expertise available through ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing), the King County Housing Authority, local faith-based organizations with housing programs, nonprofit and for-profit housing developers, and other resources interested in affordable housing for seniors. In addition, the City should identify the necessary changes in land use regulations and building codes that will make alternative housing easier to implement.

Additional goals, policies and background information that support affordable and senior housing are found in the Housing Element.

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***Goal HS-3: Provide funds to nonprofit human service providers to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents.***

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***Policy HS-3.1: Maintain and support a Human Services Advisory Committee.***

The Human Services Advisory Committee provides policy and funding recommendations on human service activities to the City Council. In particular, the Committee makes funding recommendations to the City Council on the expenditures of the City's Human Service Funds. The Committee is a valuable resource for the City Council and should be continued to help the City have strong human service programs.

***Policy HS-3.2: Provide funding for local nonprofit agencies serving the needs of Kirkland residents.***

To improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents, the City provides support to local nonprofit organizations who administer services for those in need. The City Council should continue to allocate General Funds to support community-based

nonprofit agencies that ensure a broad range of adequate support services are available to low- and moderate-income residents.

***Policy HS-3.3: Commit Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) to affordable housing and house repairs for low- and moderate-income residents.***

The City seeks to strengthen partnerships between jurisdictions and other government agencies, nonprofit and for-profit organizations to enable those organizations to provide decent and affordable housing, establish and maintain a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for every resident, particularly those at or below the 80 percent of median income.

The City commits CDBG and General Funds to provide affordable housing in East King County through nonprofit agencies, such as ARCH. The City should continue to support these agencies and their effort to provide affordable housing to Eastside residents, particularly low-income.

The City also uses its CDBG capital funds to support King County's program that responds to housing repair needs for low- to moderate-income individuals and families who cannot afford to repair their homes. The City should continue to support this program.

***Policy HS-3.4: Administer community donation programs.***

The City offers residents the opportunity to donate funds through programs such as "Kirkland Cares" that assist Kirkland residents through the utility billing process. The City contracts with a local nonprofit organization to allocate these funds to help struggling Kirkland families pay their heating, electric, and water/sewer utility bills, and to provide food, shelter, homelessness prevention, and ongoing support to help families move out of crisis and get back on their feet. The City should continue to administer and promote community donation programs to help families in need.

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***Policy HS-3.5: Participate and provide leadership in local and regional human service efforts.***

Meeting human service needs requires a regional solution. The City should continue to work with other jurisdictions and community partners within the region to develop a regional planning effort to identify critical human services needs and to seek regional means of meeting those needs. This includes taking a leadership role on local forums and committees. The City should also take a lead in planning for and addressing the needs of the recent growth of immigrants and refugees in the community.

***Policy HS-3.6: Ensure human service programs are available and accessible.***

It is a priority of the City to ensure that programs are accessible to all. To this end, the City should provide programs, and operating and capital funds annually to support social and health needs for those who have special needs, are financially challenged, are homeless, and/or who have limited access based on their language or cultural needs. Where we can, the City should provide language and culturally appropriate programs and scholarships, and accommodations for those with special needs. The City also should collaborate with other jurisdictions and nonprofit entities to assist in meeting the needs for Kirkland residents.

