
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.
- ◆ It must be consistent with the adopted County-wide 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.

The City's legislative and administrative actions and decisions must be in compliance with the adopted plan. To accomplish this a number of tasks need to be completed. The Implementation 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 Comprehensive Plan.

The City has used the Comprehensive Plan as the policy basis for decisions, particularly for determinations under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). With this revised Comprehensive Plan adopted under the Growth Management Act, the City has strived to integrate SEPA into the zoning permit review process rather than 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 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 promote active community participation in all levels of planning decisions.

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B. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

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: Prepare the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in conformance with Vision 2020 and with the Countywide Planning Policies for King County.

Vision 2020 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: Work with adjacent jurisdictions and other governmental agencies to better coordinate on planning activities and development decisions.

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 housing (ARCH), transportation (traffic modeling, transit, and commute trip reduction), and land use.

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: 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 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 has involved community input and should continue to reflect the priorities and values of its residents and the business community.

Goal GP-2: To promote 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 applicants and neighbors prior to 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 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 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 posting of notices to parties that may be affected by planning decisions;
- ◆ Early neighborhood meetings by applicants for development permits;
- ◆ 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;
- ◆ Providing opportunities for reconsideration or appeal of decisions; and
- ◆ Notifying neighborhood, condominium and business associations.

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

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

The City encourages the formation of neighborhood associations. 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.

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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 can only be amended once a year except in emergencies. Section 365-195-630 of the Washington Administrative Code states that all amendments 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.

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 takes the lead role as the City's citizen representative body responsible for conducting the public hearing and transmitting a recommendation to the City Council. The Houghton Community Council, Kirkland Transportation Commission and Park Board also take public comment 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.

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 basis to 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 establishes a schedule for amending the neighborhood plans and reviews the schedule each year as part of the Planning Department's work program. 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.