

LAND USE ELEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Kirkland’s existing pattern of land use has served the City well for many years. Over the next 20 years, the real challenge for the community will be how to preserve existing community character in the face of continued population and employment growth.

Kirkland is part of a regional and interrelated pattern of land uses. Most land in the City is devoted to housing, and the majority of Kirkland residents commute to other communities to work.

The following Table LU-1 shows the percent of land uses based on the City’s total land area in 2013: **change from table to to pie chart**

**Table LU-1
2013 – Land Use by Percent of the City’s
Total Land Area**

Land Use	Percent
Single family	46
Right-of-Way	20
Multifamily	8
Parks	8
Vacant	6
Institutional	5
Commercial	3
Office	2
Industrial	2
Utilities	.44
Mixed Use	.20

Source: City of Kirkland "Community Profile" and King County Assessor's

Kirkland is also a balanced community, providing shops, services and employment both for local residents and for those who live in other communities. In fact, in 2000 Kirkland’s ratio of jobs to

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households was very close to the same as exists in King County, illustrating that Kirkland had its fair share of jobs. Table LU-2 below shows the job to household ratios for 2000 and 2022 at growth targets.

Table LU-2
Jobs to Household Ratio

	2013	2035 @ Growth Targets
Kirkland		
King County		

Source: *Still gathering data*

Kirkland is also a city of neighborhoods – each with its own mix of population, housing, commercial opportunities, and visual features which help form its unique character. The City’s residential neighborhoods are generally strong and well established. They are also diverse in housing type, size, style, history, maturity and affordability. More mixed-use residential/commercial centers have developed, including Juanita Village and Downtown Kirkland.

The commercial areas are healthy, offer a broad range of goods and services, and provide a strong tax base to help fund public services and facilities. Kirkland has a diverse economic base with several retail centers, mixed-use retail/office districts, a regional health care center, auto dealerships, business parks, industrial complexes and home-based businesses.

More information on existing land uses can be found in the City’s *Community Profile* document available in the Planning Department at Kirkland City Hall.

Between 2013 and 2035, the City will grow by nearly 8,361 new housing units and 22,435 jobs. These projections are referred to as “growth targets”. Under the Growth Management Act, planning policies seek to direct growth to existing and emerging urban areas within the metropolitan region. The King County Growth Management Planning Council allocates growth targets to jurisdictions and Kirkland is responsible for planning for the increased needs for housing, commercial floorspace, and public services.

Future growth will raise other issues relating to land use: special needs housing, increased traffic congestion, pressure on natural resources and challenges to locate regional facilities. A larger proportion of elderly residents will focus new attention on the special housing and transportation needs of this group. Land use relationships which support transit and provide shops and services closer to home will be important for those with decreased mobility. And, with growth not only in Kirkland, but throughout the Puget Sound region, the community will continue to suffer from the problems of traffic congestion, diminishing natural resources, and the need to find locations for new regional facilities. Regional solutions will be needed to solve these problems.

Issues which must be addressed by the Land Use Element include:

- How to plan for the 2035 household and employment growth targets established by the King County Growth Management Planning Council.

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- How to manage the new growth to protect the residential character of the community, while allowing for new and innovative development that responds to changing household needs.
- How to provide for a diversity of employment opportunities and maintain viable commercial areas.
- How to use the pattern of land use to minimize traffic congestion and protect local air quality.
- How to maintain a land use pattern that can be efficiently and effectively served by public services and utilities.
- How to protect Kirkland's environmentally sensitive areas, open space corridors, drainage basins, steep slopes, and shoreline as new housing units and commercial floorspace are developed.
- How to respond to the regional responsibility to help site new regional facilities.

The Land Use Element works together with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan to answer these questions. While the Land Use Element addresses accommodating growth and sets out general residential siting criteria, the Housing Element more specifically addresses issues of neighborhood character, affordability, and special needs housing.

The Transportation Element identifies the improvements needed to support the land use pattern established by the Land Use Element.

Growth management concerns identified in this element, such as preservation of community character, relationship to the natural environment, and adequate public and human services are amplified in the Community Character, Natural Environment, Parks and Recreation, Capital Facilities, Human Services, Utilities, and Public Services Elements.

Finally, the Land Use Element's discussion of commercial areas is strongly tied to the Economic Development Element. Kirkland's goal to "strengthen the unique role and economic success of Kirkland's commercial areas" (Economic Development Goal ED-3) is echoed in the Land Use Element.

B. THE LAND USE CONCEPT

The fundamental goal of the Land Use Element is to maintain a balanced and complete community by retaining the community's character and quality of life, while accommodating growth and minimizing traffic congestion and service delivery costs. To accomplish this, the Element:

- Seeks a compact and walkable community with shops, services and employment close to home; numerous civic activities and entertainment options; high-quality educational facilities; numerous parks; and a variety of housing choices.
- Identifies the values that must be weighed in managing growth. Goals and policies promote a land use pattern that is orderly, compact, well- designed, and responsive both to the natural and physical environment.
- Proposes a land use pattern that supports a multimodal transportation system and results in more efficient service delivery. Placing urban neighborhoods around commercial areas allows residents to walk or bicycle to corner stores or neighborhood centers, and then connect by transit to other commercial areas. High-capacity transit could connect and serve larger commercial areas, both inside and outside of the community.
- Protects existing residential neighborhoods. Goals and policies support a stable nucleus of single-family housing and more housing options. Higher-density residential areas continue to be located near commercial centers and transportation hubs.

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- Supports a range of employment opportunities in the City and sets out standards for vibrant commercial areas. Opportunities for new growth are provided in the Totem Lake Center and Downtown Kirkland. Other existing commercial areas in the City are maintained and strengthened. While not encouraging heavy industry, goals and policies work to preserve opportunities for higher-paying jobs to locate in the City.
- Encourages preservation of an open space network, including environmentally sensitive areas, recreational facilities, and the shoreline; and
- Acknowledges the City's regional role in working with other jurisdictions and the County to site regional facilities.

C. LAND USE MAP AND DEFINITIONS

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map (Figure LU-1) indicates where certain types of uses may be appropriate.

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map identifies areas for a range of housing densities and a variety of nonresidential uses. The Map contains land use designations reflecting the predominant use allowed in each area. These designations are reflected in a broad variety of zoning districts on the Kirkland Zoning Map. Within some of these land use designations are mixed-use developments.

The land use categories mapped on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are defined in the Glossary, Appendix ____:

Figure LU-1: Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map



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Table LU-3 below provides a range of residential densities described in the Comprehensive Plan with comparable zoning classifications. In many of Kirkland’s commercial and mixed use areas, the Comprehensive Plan does not specify a maximum residential density.

**Table LU-3
Residential Densities and Comparable Zones**

General Residential Densities	Residential Densities as Specified in Comprehensive Plan in Dwelling Units per Net Acres (d/a)	Comparable Zoning Classification
GREENBELT/URBAN SEPARATOR	Up to 1 d/a	RSA – 1
LOW DENSITY	Up to 1 d/a	RS – 35,000, RSX – 35,000
	Up to 3 d/a	RS – 12,500, RSX – 12,500
	4 – 5 d/a	RS – 8,500, RSX – 8,500, RS – 7,200, RSX – 7,200, RSA – 4
	6 d/a	RS – 7,200, RSX – 7,200, RSA – 6
	7 d/a	RS – 6,300
	8 – 9 d/a	RS – 5,000, RSX – 5,000, RSA – 8
MEDIUM DENSITY	8 – 9 d/a	RM – 5,000, RMA – 5,000
HIGH DENSITY	10 – 14 d/a	RM – 3,600, RMA – 3,600
	15 – 18 d/a	RM – 2,400, RMA – 2,400, BNA
	19 – 24 d/a	RM – 1,800, RMA – 1,800, BNA
	48 d/a	BN, MSC 2

Higher unit per acre counts may occur within each classification if developed under the City’s PUD, innovative or affordable housing programs.

D. LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

Land Use goals and policies are organized into six categories: Growth Management; Land Use/Transportation Linkages; Residential; Commercial and Mixed Use; Open Space and Resource Protection; and Essential Public Facilities, Government Facilities and Community Facilities.

Growth Management

Washington's Growth Management Act establishes goals to be considered in the development of local comprehensive plans. These goals include concentrating growth in urban areas to provide efficient services and reduce sprawl, supporting transportation choices, providing housing that is affordable to all, and encouraging economic development. Vision 2040 sets an overarching goal of focusing growth in urban areas to create walkable, compact, transit-oriented communities that maintain local character. These goals are consistent with the vision established by Kirkland citizens.

Even so, implementing these goals requires balance. Growth and development changes the community and brings more traffic. How we manage that growth so that it fits with established community character and creates walkable places that provide residents and workers with transportation choices is the challenge. Kirkland has a long history of growth management that has preserved a community that remains a highly desirable place to live, work, and play. With thoughtful land use planning and an engaged citizenry, Kirkland will retain that quality in 2035 and beyond.

Goal LU-1: Manage community growth and redevelopment to ensure:

- *An orderly pattern of land use;*
- *A balanced and complete community;*
- *Maintenance and improvement of the City's existing character; and*
- *Protection of environmentally sensitive areas.*

Policy LU-1.1: Maintain clear and predictable development regulations that are consistent with City goals and policies.

Traditionally, development regulations have attempted to avert conflict by segregating development types into districts with relatively uniform development characteristics such as permitted uses or height. In many areas of Kirkland, this approach is a reasonable and effective method for regulating development.

In other parts of Kirkland, it may be possible and desirable to have several different types of development located relatively close to each other. Such a blending of development types could help reduce dependence on the automobile and provide greater opportunities for innovative mixed-use development. In these areas, development regulations may need to be specially developed to address the district's unique characteristics.

Policy LU-1.2: Create logical boundaries between land use districts that take into account such considerations as existing and planned land uses, access, property lines, topographic conditions, and natural features.

Boundaries between land use districts should make sense. Where features such as roads or parcel lines cannot be used to identify boundaries, natural features, such as streams or topographical changes, can form distinct edges. Allowed uses should be compatible with adjacent land use districts through physical improvements and/or design elements.

Policy LU-1.3: Encourage attractive site and building design that is compatible in scale and in character with existing or planned development.

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Attractive site and building design can create a cohesive and functional development that reflects local character and fits well with surrounding uses. In parts of the City where the community vision has not yet been realized, however, new development should not necessarily look to surrounding uses for design ideas. Instead, the Comprehensive or Neighborhood Plan should be used to provide guidance on desirable characteristics.

Policy LU-1.4: Create effective transitions between different land uses.

Some of the most sensitive lands to plan are the transition areas between different types of uses. Uses along the boundary of a commercial area may generate impacts on nearby residential uses. Maintaining privacy may be an issue when mixing residential densities. Residential uses in close proximity to industrial development may set up nearly unresolvable conflicts with regard to noise and traffic.

Building and site design can act to minimize such conflicts. Buffers, such as fences, berms, or vegetation can minimize visual and noise impacts. Buildings might also serve a buffering purpose to the extent that they serve as visual screens or insulate noise. Effective land use transitions can also include building modulation, upper story setbacks, and other building design elements.

Within many of the City's commercial areas, mixing of land uses is encouraged to bring shops, services and offices in close proximity to residential uses. These mixed use areas provide an immediate market for the commercial services, convenient shopping and employment opportunities to the residences, and reduce the need to drive.

Policy LU-1.5: Regulate land use and development in environmentally sensitive areas to protect environmental quality and avoid unnecessary public and private costs.

Development in natural constraint areas may increase health and safety risks and create other unnecessary costs associated with hazards like landslides, flooding, uneven settlement, erosion, and disrupted subsurface drainage. Public and private costs are also incurred from development in areas with natural amenities or which perform utilitarian or biological functions. The purpose of this policy is to regulate, and in some cases restrict, development activity to ensure a high standard of environmental quality, and to prevent undue costs to property owners, neighbors, and the City.

- **Goal LU-2:** Promote a compact, efficient, and sustainable land use pattern in Kirkland that: Supports a multimodal transportation system that efficiently moves people and goods;
- Minimizes energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and service costs;
- Conserves land, water, and natural resources; and
- Provides sufficient land area and development intensity to accommodate Kirkland's share of the regionally adopted population and employment targets.

Policy LU-2.1: Support a range of development densities in Kirkland, recognizing environmental constraints and community character.

The Countywide Planning Policies establish two broad categories of lands: urban and rural. Urban lands are those which are inside the Urban Growth Area, ranging from the suburban densities of much of the Eastside to the very high urban densities found in downtown Seattle. The Countywide Planning Policies identify all of Kirkland as an urban area.

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Policy LU-2.2: Facilitate infill development and encourage redevelopment of underutilized land.

Some land in or adjacent to developed areas has been skipped over as development shifted to outlying areas. In some cases, natural constraints or other factors may have rendered the land unsuitable for development. It is not the intent of this policy to encourage development in environmentally sensitive areas or preclude the use of undeveloped land for open space. However, infill development is encouraged when environmental protection is ensured.

Redevelopment of existing development (for example, converting a parking lot to a new building with structured parking) may also occur as land use plans change. As in all cases, however, the benefits to be achieved under this policy must be weighed against the values expressed in other policies of this Plan – such values as historic preservation and maintenance of existing affordable housing.

Policy LU-2.3: Ensure an adequate supply of housing units and commercial floorspace to meet the required growth targets.

As growth occurs, the need for new housing units and commercial floorspace will increase. Kirkland is required to accommodate growth targets for household units and employment established by the King County Growth Management Planning Council as mandated by the Growth Management Act. The community must balance this need with the desire to retain existing community character and with the City’s ability to provide infrastructure and public services to serve the new growth. The City should monitor its existing residential and nonresidential capacity to determine how fast and where new growth is occurring and whether Kirkland can accommodate the required growth targets. Available capacity is a calculation of likely development potential in the foreseeable future based on certain assumptions and factors and assumed to cover a 20-year time horizon. Table LU-4 below shows that the City can accommodate the 2035 growth targets with its available capacity.

**Table LU-4
Comparison of Growth Targets and Available Capacity**

	2013 Existing¹	2035 Growth Targets²	Available Capacity³
Housing Units	36,866	45,227 (at 8,361 new households)	46,382 (at 9,516 new households)
Employment	Data collection	_____ (at 22,435 new jobs)	_____ (at 22,435 new jobs)

Sources:

1. 2013 housing units:
2013 employment:
2. Targets for household and employment growth between 2013 and 2031 were assigned by the King County Countywide Planning Policies and projected to 2035.
3. City estimates.

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Policy LU-2.4: Support development patterns that promote public health and provide opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity and social connectivity.

The physical design of communities affects our behavior. Communities without convenient parks, safe sidewalks, and local-serving retail require their residents to drive more and walk less. They also lack the gathering places that bring communities together for daily interaction. In contrast, Kirkland's thoughtful urban design, extensive parks system, emphasis on pedestrians, and mixed use villages should continue to invite residents to be active and engage in their community.

Land Use/Transportation Linkages

Land use/transportation linkage policies address the relationship between the land use pattern and a complete transportation system. Separation of jobs and housing means longer commute trips – generally accommodated on the City's roadways either by private automobile or transit. When shops and services are long distances from residential areas, this also translates into additional vehicle or transit trips. Allowing residential and nonresidential uses to locate in closer proximity provides transportation options making walking or bicycling a viable option.

Site design standards also impact the ability of drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists to get around. Policies in this section discuss the importance of considering connections and transportation choices when planning new development.

Goal LU-3: Provide a land use pattern that promotes mobility, transportation choices, and convenient access to goods and services.

Policy LU-3.1: Create and maintain neighborhoods that allow residents and employees to walk or bicycle to places that meet their daily needs.

Kirkland presently has a largely complete network of commercial and employment centers, and many of the City's residential neighborhoods can easily access a shopping area. This policy intends to further strengthen the relationship between urban neighborhoods and commercial development areas.

Policy LU-3.2: Encourage residential development within commercial areas.

Incorporating residential development into commercial areas provides benefits for businesses and residents alike. Housing within commercial areas provides the opportunity for people to live close to shops, services, and places of employment. Conversely, residents living within commercial areas create a localized market for nearby goods and services, provide increased security, and help to create a "sense of community" for those districts.

Residential development within commercial areas should be compatible with and complementary to business activity.

Policy LU-3.3: Encourage housing, offices, shops, and services at or near the park and ride lots.

Park and ride facilities provide a potential location for offices, shops, and services serving two sets of customers: nearby residents and transit riders. In addition, housing at these facilities supports transit

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use. The design of these facilities should be carefully considered to ensure protection of the surrounding neighborhood. The City should work with Metropolitan King County to develop standards for housing, offices, shops and services at these facilities.

Policy LU-3.4: Locate higher density land uses in areas served by frequent transit service.

As decisions are made about locating future growth in Kirkland, the availability of viable transportation choices should be taken directly into account in relation to the location and intensity of that growth.

Policy LU-3.5: Provide vehicular access for commercial development from arterials or freeways and avoid vehicular access from residential streets.

Because of heavier traffic patterns and delivery traffic associated with commercial uses, primary transportation routes should be oriented toward non-residential streets.

Policy LU-3.6: Incorporate features in new development projects that support transportation choices.

Site design can play an important role in promoting transportation choices. Locations of buildings and bus stops on a site, for example, can mean the difference between having transit users walk long distances through the rain or being dropped off at the door. Something as simple as the provision of covered bicycle racks may encourage a would-be cyclist.

Policy LU-3.7: Reduce minimum parking requirements in areas based on the availability of amenities such as frequent transit service and convenient shops and services.

Where people have viable alternatives to car ownership and lower parking needs are demonstrated, new development should not be required to build more parking supply than the actual demand. Unused parking is an inefficient use of land and imposes significant additional costs on residents and businesses.

Policy LU-3.8: Create a complementary relationship between adjoining land uses and the Cross Kirkland Corridor and Eastside Rail Corridor, both in terms of short term nonmotorized access and future opportunities for high capacity transit.

The corridors have evolved significantly from heavy rail use to nonmotorized access and recreation. The corridors will continue to evolve as opportunities for future transportation are realized. This evolution should be carefully considered and leveraged in relation to planned land use along the corridor.

Policy LU-3.9: Encourage vehicular and nonmotorized connections between adjacent properties.

Improved pedestrian connections between adjacent properties and to adjacent streets minimizes walking distances and provides safe walking surfaces, which in turn can result in less driving and more opportunities for physical activity. Vehicle connections between adjacent properties reduce congestion on streets, number of turning movements and gasoline consumption. Fences or impenetrable landscape buffers may prevent convenient pedestrian connections. The intent of this policy is to encourage connections and to avoid such barriers to easy access.

Residential

Most of the land in Kirkland is developed with housing of some type - whether single-family or multifamily homes. Kirkland will continue to be primarily a residential community and preservation and protection of residential neighborhoods is an important goal to ensure future livability.

The notion of preserving community character is one that is explored more fully in the Housing and Community Character Elements and the Neighborhood Plans, where careful review of the features that make a neighborhood unique are identified. In the Land Use Element, the general notion of protection of community character is promoted. However, this Element also acknowledges that the community will be growing and that a balance must be struck between providing more housing units and preserving the neighborhoods as they are today.

Several of the most important housing issues – affordability, special needs housing, and accessory units – are not addressed in this Element. They are discussed, instead, in the Housing Element.

Goal LU-4: Protect and enhance the character and quality of residential neighborhoods while accommodating the City's growth targets.

Policy LU-4.1: Maintain and enhance the character of Kirkland's residential areas.

The community's vision and guiding principles established in this Plan foresee residential neighborhoods that remain vibrant, livable, diverse, and affordable.,.

Policy LU-4.2: Locate the highest density residential areas close to shops and services and transportation hubs.

Denser residential areas should continue to be sited close to or within commercial areas and transportation hubs to increase transportation choices.

Policy LU-4.3: Allow for new residential growth consistent with the basic pattern of land use in the City.

Infill development is expected in low density residential areas based on availability of developable land, while higher densities are clustered near existing commercial areas.

Policy LU-4.4: Consider neighborhood character and integrity when determining the extent and type of land use changes.

Protection of community character is a theme woven throughout the Land Use Element. Community character is most clearly expressed through the Neighborhood Plans. It is the intent of this policy to direct specific consideration of the unique characteristics of neighborhoods, as described in the Neighborhood Plans, before committing to major area-wide residential land use changes.

Commercial and Mixed Use

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Commercial land uses are a critical part of the Kirkland community. They provide shopping and service opportunities for Kirkland residents, and also create employment within the City. The tax revenues generated by business help fund the capital facilities and public services that residents enjoy.

In return, the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods provides a main attraction for both businesses and their patrons. The proximity to Lake Washington, the fine system of parks, the availability of a regional medical center, top notch educational facilities, the environmental ethic of the community, and quality infrastructure attract outsiders to Kirkland and make the City a good place to do business – for employers, employees, and customers.

Problems that the community faces – traffic congestion, particularly – create concerns for commercial land uses. Ease of transporting goods and adequate parking are especially important. An underlying premise of the Land Use Element is that, in the future, residents of the City will not drive as much as they do presently to avoid being in traffic congestion. To that end, the Element attempts to promote commercial land use patterns that support transportation choices.

Along with the need to provide new housing units for future residents, the City will need to designate adequate land area for commercial uses, some of which may employ Kirkland residents. If the opportunity for local employment is increased, the high proportion of residents who work outside the community may be reduced. This in turn would ease traffic congestion by shortening commute trips and making other modes of travel to work more feasible.

In addition, many of Kirkland's commercial areas are designated for mixed use development. Mixed use development is a fundamental part of the regional and local growth strategy. As evidenced in areas like Downtown Kirkland and Juanita Village, the mixing of residential and commercial uses creates compact, walkable, transit-oriented communities. Residents and employees in these communities have choices about the mode of transportation they use to meet their daily needs, businesses benefit by having a close-in customer base, and public services are more efficiently provided to more people. The Land Use Element emphasizes the quality of the mixed use environment to ensure that mixed use development creates highly desirable places for people to live, work, and play.

Currently, a variety of "commercial and mixed use development areas" exists in the City, based primarily on size and relationship to the regional market and transportation system (see Figure LU-2: Commercial and Mixed Use Areas).

Some of Kirkland's commercial areas serve primarily the surrounding neighborhood; residents depend on their neighborhood grocery store, dry cleaners, bank, etc., for everyday needs. Other commercial areas have a subregional or regional draw. Most of the larger commercial areas are centered around major intersections.

The Land Use Element provides general direction for development standards in commercial and mixed use areas. The following terms are used in the discussion of commercial and mixed use areas:

Urban Center (Mixed Use)

An Urban Center is a regionally significant concentration of employment and housing, with direct service by high-capacity transit and a wide range of land uses, such as retail, recreational, public

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facilities, parks and open space. An Urban Center has a mix of uses and densities to efficiently support transit as part of the regional high-capacity transit system.

Downtown Kirkland (Mixed Use)

Downtown Kirkland is an area of moderate commercial and residential concentration that functions as a focal point for the community and is served by a transit center.

Mixed Use Village

A Mixed Use Village is an area that serves the needs for goods and services of the local community as well as the subregional market. These districts vary in uses and intensities and may include office, retail, restaurants, housing, hotels and service businesses. Grocery stores are considered a high-priority anchor for these areas. Residential uses are encouraged where they support and do not displace the commercial viability of these areas.

Neighborhood Market

A Neighborhood Market consists of individual stores or mixed-use buildings/centers that are pedestrian-oriented and serve the local neighborhood. Residential scale and design are critical to integrate these uses into the surrounding residential area. Residential uses may be located above or behind commercial uses in the center, at densities specified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mixed Use Business Center

Mixed Use Business Centers are employment centers that incorporate a mix of uses including office, retail, restaurant, and hotels. Residential uses are encouraged to strengthen these areas as active 24-hour communities.

Corridor District (Mixed Use)

Corridor Districts are linear districts arranged along an arterial with commercial uses that benefit from automobile and transit volumes. Enhanced pedestrian orientation and integration residential uses are critical to integrating these corridors with adjoining land uses.

Commercial Flex

Commercial Flex areas serve both the local and regional markets and may include office, light manufacturing, high technology, wholesale trade, and limited retail. They do not include residential uses.

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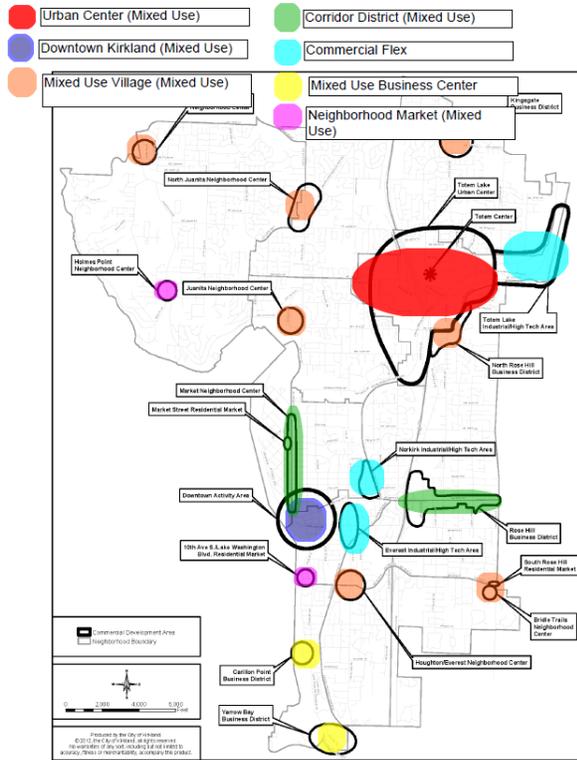


Figure LU-2: Commercial Areas

Commercial & Mixed Use Areas

Goal LU-5: Plan for a hierarchy of commercial and mixed use areas serving neighborhood, community, and/or regional needs.

Policy LU-5.1: Reflect the following principles in development standards and land use plans for commercial and mixed use areas:

Urban Design

- Create lively and attractive districts with a human scale.
- Create attractive, pedestrian-oriented streets through building placement and design and by minimizing the obtrusive nature of parking lots. Support a mix of retail, office, and residential uses in multistory structures.
- Create effective transitions between commercial areas and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Access

- Encourage multimodal transportation options.
- Promote an intensity and density of land uses sufficient to support effective transit and pedestrian activity.
- Promote a street pattern that provides through connections, pedestrian accessibility and vehicular access.
- Encourage pedestrian travel to and within commercial and mixed use areas by providing:
 - Safe and attractive walkways;
 - Close groupings of stores and offices;

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- Placement of parking in structures, underground, or to the back or side of buildings.

Each commercial and mixed use area has its own unique attributes, although generalized development guidelines which work to preserve community character and support a complete transportation system are described in the above policies. Particular emphasis is placed on improving pedestrian accessibility in commercial areas.

These policies recognize that urban design is important, and that well-designed commercial and mixed use areas, in partnership with Kirkland's residential neighborhoods, will project a positive community image.

Good urban design complements and enhances adjacent residential areas.

Policy LU-5.2: Maintain and strengthen existing commercial and mixed use areas by focusing economic development within them.

The intent of this policy is that future economic development be concentrated in existing commercial and mixed use areas. This concentration can help to maintain and strengthen these areas and also promote orderly and efficient growth that minimizes impacts and service expansion costs. Concentration also allows businesses to benefit from proximity to each other.

Intensification, rather than expansion of the boundaries of existing commercial areas into surrounding residential neighborhoods, is desirable. Infilling is preferred, particularly when it would create a denser pattern of development that is focused less on the automobile and more on the opportunity for multiple transportation modes. Redevelopment may also provide new opportunities, especially in commercial areas where the community vision has changed over time.

Policy LU-5.3: Enhance and strengthen Kirkland's commercial and mixed use areas consistent with the neighborhood plan for each area.

Each of Kirkland's commercial and mixed use areas has unique characteristics based on its role in the community and/or region. Totem Lake is designated as an Urban Center and the Totem Lake neighborhood plan will guide its redevelopment. Downtown Kirkland is the community's historic commercial center and the Moss Bay neighborhood plan establishes the policy guidance for its future. Similarly, policies for each area will be found in the applicable neighborhood plan.

Policy LU-5.4: Provide opportunities for a variety of employment.

Kirkland's commercial areas provide a diversity of jobs; from primary jobs that that bring new revenue into the community, to high-tech jobs that attract creative industry leaders, to service jobs that provide necessary goods and services to the community. All of these employment types are important to a balanced community and plans for each of Kirkland's commercial areas should strengthen appropriate employment opportunities.

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Policy LU-5-5: Maintain and enhance Kirkland’s diverse Mixed Use Villages to serve as business centers and as walkable focal points for the local community. Reflect the following principles in development standards and land use plans for these areas:

- Preserve and enhance neighborhood-serving retail, especially grocery stores.
- Promote a mix of complementary uses.
- Support redevelopment at an intensity that helps meet Kirkland’s required growth targets in walkable neighborhoods with good transit service.
- Create gathering places and opportunities for social interaction.
- Create and maintain unique places that complement and reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The general principles for Mixed Use Villages are intended to preserve and enhance vibrant, economically healthy, and walkable communities. The neighborhood plan for each village should ensure that the vision responds to the unique qualities of the area.

Policy LU-5.6: Encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse of Kirkland’s Flex Commercial areas in a manner that supports the existing mix of allowed uses while enabling these areas to evolve into innovative areas for commerce and employment.

Kirkland’s Flex Commercial areas owe their diversity to a history of industrial development – much of it located along the former heavy rail corridor. As new industrial development shifts elsewhere in the region, Kirkland’s Flex Commercial areas will serve two vital roles. First, existing development is in demand for a variety of uses that can be accommodated in the existing building stock. Second, over time, more high-tech companies will locate new development in these areas and benefit from the availability of large parcels with access to the Cross Kirkland Corridor and Eastside Rail Corridor and vibrant neighborhoods.

Open Space and Resource Protection

Open space may serve amenity, utilitarian and/or recreational purposes. Open space also may protect and preserve special natural places such as stream corridors, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. As growth continues, the value of open space will increase, providing relief from the urban environment and an opportunity to experience nature inside the City.

Public agencies, including the City, King County, and the State already own important areas of open space within and on the borders of the City. These areas serve as the foundation for an open space system. Wetland and stream setbacks and buffers provide corridors of open space. Native Growth Protection Easements held by the City also preserve environmentally sensitive open spaces and habitat.

Open space goals and policies are included in the Natural Environment, and Parks and Recreation Elements. The intent of the following goal is to prompt further action to identify and develop a coordinated and connected open space system. The accompanying policies address this process, and also speak to certain specific types of open space.

Goal LU-6: Establish a coordinated and connected system of open space throughout the City that:

- Preserves natural systems,

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- Protects wildlife habitat and corridors,
- Provides land for recreation, and
- Preserves natural landforms and scenic areas.

Policy LU-6.1: Distribute parks and open spaces throughout the City, but particularly focus new facilities in areas of the City facing the greatest population growth, in areas where facilities are deficient, and/or in areas where connections of the open space network could be made.

The intent of this policy is to establish priorities for open space acquisition or protection.

Policy LU-6.2: Work with adjacent jurisdictions; County, State, federal, and tribal governments; and non-profit groups to identify and protect open space networks to be preserved within and around Kirkland.

Preserving open space corridors inside in the City need not conflict with private property rights or preclude the reasonable use of land. To this end, a variety of strategies should be considered that provide opportunities for negotiating “win-win” approaches to preservation and development.

Policy LU-6.3: Consider the City’s streets and the Cross Kirkland Corridor as integral parts of the overall open space network.

A high percentage of the City’s land area is in public-rights-of-way. In addition to the vehicular functions they serve, these areas are an important part of Kirkland’s pedestrian and green-space network. Management of streets to preserve and enhance these functions improves the cohesiveness of the overall system. In addition, the Cross Kirkland Corridor and Eastside Rail Corridor provide an extraordinary opportunity to link many existing open spaces together in a coordinated manner.

Policy LU-6.4: Preserve Kirkland’s urban separator.

Urban separators break up urban development and help distinguish between communities. Kirkland is fortunate to have several “ready-made” urban separators. The City should also explore opportunities to create new urban separators as part of the open space network.

Goal LU-7: Protect and enhance Kirkland’s natural resources.

Policy 7.1: Continue to designate and protect critical areas based on best available science, with special consideration to preserving and enhancing anadromous fisheries.

Critical areas include wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas.

Policy LU-7.2: Decrease greenhouse gas emissions through land use strategies that promote a mix of housing, employment, and services at intensities sufficient to promote walking, bicycling, and transit.

Kirkland has signed onto the U.S. Mayor’s Climate protection agreement, which includes a commitment to reducing the City’s global warming emissions and adopting land use policies and regulations that reduce sprawl, preserve open space and the urban forest, and create a compact, walkable community

with transportation options.

Essential Public Facilities, Government Facilities and Community Facilities

Essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities serve a variety of populations. Some serve local low-income residents who may not have easy access to private transportation. Others, such as landfills, serve regional waste haulers in large trucks along with local residents. Recognition of the unique characteristics of the clients of these facilities is important to their siting.

Government facilities are uses consisting of services and facilities operated from any level of government. Community facilities are uses that serve the public and are generally of a public service, noncommercial nature and usually operated by nonprofit agencies or organizations. Some government and community facilities are also classified as "essential public facilities" as defined in Chapter 36.70A RCW and as discussed below in more detail.

RCW 36.70A.200 states that, "No local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities" and requires that each county and city have "a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities." Essential public facilities are defined in RCW 36.70A.200 as "those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, State education facilities and State or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.06.140, State and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020." The State Office of Financial Management maintains a list of essential State public facilities and may at any time add facilities to the list.

The intent of the following goal is to acknowledge that different essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities have different siting needs, depending on their customers and their unique characteristics. Kirkland residents depend on all of these facilities. For that reason, their location within the City should not be precluded. However, Kirkland is also a well-established community with a strong desire to maintain existing community character. The possible negative impacts of siting these facilities in the City should be mitigated to the maximum extent possible, but mitigation should not be unreasonable to the point of precluding the facilities.

Goal LU-8: Maintain criteria, regulations and procedures that allow for the siting of essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities.

Policy LU-8.1: Work cooperatively with King County, the State and/or other cities to site essential public facilities.

The King County Countywide Planning Policies set out a process whereby all local jurisdictions and the County will jointly develop standards for the siting of essential public facilities. The City should work cooperatively with the State, King County and other cities in the siting of essential public facilities.

Policy LU-8.2: Consider the following in siting essential public facilities:

- Accessibility to the people served;
- Public involvement;
- Protection of neighborhoods;

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- Preservation of natural resources;
- The cost-effectiveness of service delivery;
- Location near transit and mixed-use centers; and
- The goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The intent of this policy is to set forth the criteria which Kirkland should use in assessing locations for new or expanded essential public facilities.

However, the criteria may not be used to deny approval of or impose restrictions on essential public facilities inconsistent with State statutory provisions and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

Policy LU-8.3: Design essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities to reduce incompatibility with adjacent land uses.

It may be impossible for some essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities to be completely compatible with adjacent land uses. The unique nature of their operation and their special siting needs may result in some conflict with surrounding development. However, such incompatibilities should be minimized and these facilities should take responsibility for being good neighbors.

The City's development regulations contain review processes and criteria for siting essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities.