



Background

The City of Kirkland is hosting a series of four neighborhood planning workshops during the months of January and February. These workshops are designed to help neighborhoods identify issues with their existing plans (or principles for new plans) as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan update process. The City hosted the first workshop on January 28, 2014 at Kirkland City Hall (123 5th Ave) from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. The neighborhoods at this first meeting included Everest, Houghton and Lakeview. These neighborhoods share common boundaries and business districts. **Approximately 50 people** attended the workshop. Prior to the workshop, neighbors were encouraged to read their neighborhood plans and come prepared with questions and suggestions.

Welcome & introduction

Penny Mabie (facilitator) welcomed attendees to the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and discussed the format of the workshop. She noted that the purpose of the meeting was to give neighbors the opportunity to review their existing neighborhood plans and identify potential changes they would like to see before the plans are integrated into the updated Comprehensive Plan. Penny explained that following the full group session, there would be three focused break-out sessions organized by neighborhood.

Penny then introduced Jon Pascal (Planning Commission Chair for the City of Kirkland) who would be providing additional information about the purpose of the workshops. Building on Penny's introduction, Jon reiterated the purpose of the workshops is to explore neighbors' input and feedback about their neighborhood plans in the context of the City's Comprehensive Plan update. Jon asked how many attendees had read their neighborhood plans and a significant number raised their hands. Jon used this opportunity to get attendees thinking about what was missing from their neighborhood plans, what was great about their neighborhoods, and what they thought their neighborhoods needed. With these questions in mind, Jon reminded the audience about the value of their input.

Presentation

Penny introduced Eric Shields (City of Kirkland, Director of Planning). Eric gave a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the following:

- Background and purpose of the City's Comprehensive Plan update.
- Elements included in the Comprehensive Plan and how they affect urban development decisions, levels of service for public facilities, and zoning and development regulations.
- How the Comprehensive Plan integrates with Neighborhood plans and regulations.

- How the Comprehensive Plan evolves over time as a result of updates every eight years and annual planning and zoning amendments. The Planning Commission oversees this process and there are many opportunities for public involvement.
- Future 2035 growth targets for housing and employment, including 8,360 housing units and 22,430 jobs. Kirkland is also projected to experience an increase in population of 13,000 people to 94,000 by 2035. Kirkland has enough capacity with current zoning to meet both the housing and jobs growth targets.
- Questions related to the above targets and population growth:
 - What is our community image?
 - Where should new growth occur?
 - What types of jobs and businesses do we want?
 - How will we move from here to there? What are our future transportation options?
 - What kind of housing will be planned for?
- The ongoing process to evaluate the existing City-wide Vision statement and Framework goals.
- Major themes gleaned from the Visioning process. Kirkland residents envision their city to be Green, Walkable, Vibrant, Livable, Sustainable, Accessible, Sustainable, Friendly, and Healthy.
- What is in a neighborhood plan? Most neighborhood plans include a vision statement, specific goals, and policies related to topics ranging from historical context to urban design.
- How neighborhood plans fit into the Comprehensive Plan by planning for issues unique to neighborhoods such as transition areas, redevelopment sites, and pedestrian trails or other capital improvements.
- The neighborhood plan update process, which includes the first set of meetings in January and February 2014, are designed to engage neighborhoods and assess their plans. The second set of meetings in May and June 2014 are designed to report the results of the first set of meetings.
- Next steps include asking neighbors to attend Community Planning Day on April 26, 2014; the second set of neighborhood meetings in May and June 2014; opportunities to engage with various Planning Commission studies in 2014; and other ways for community members stay involved in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Question and answer session

Penny opened the discussion so that neighbors could ask City staff questions about the workshops, neighborhood planning, and the Comprehensive Plan. Comments and questions covered a range of topics, and are provided below. Answers to questions by City staff are noted in italics.

Why is Kirkland required to grow 9% faster than Bellevue?

Kirkland has a designated urban growth center at Totem Lake. Cities with urban growth centers have growth target numbers that are higher than cities without these types of centers. The largest cities, Bellevue and Seattle, are regional growth centers, and are expected to accommodate the highest levels of growth.

Who decided what Kirkland's growth targets would be?

The decision was based on a regional plan to prevent growth into rural areas and concentrate growth in urban areas. Ultimately, the decision was made by the King County Council.

What is the difference between a private amendment and spot zoning?

Spot zoning occurs if a City zones a piece of property differently from adjacent properties with no justification for the difference. Private amendment requests, or PARs, are applications submitted by private property owners to change the comprehensive plan and zoning designations of their properties. During the consideration of a PAR, the City looks at the conditions of the property and analyzes if there are unique conditions or whether the request should be expanded to include other nearby properties.

How are Comprehensive Plan amendments made and information transmitted to neighbors and the larger public?

PARs are considered through a two step process that requires review by the City Council and Planning Commission. The first step is determining whether there is an interest in allowing the proposed amendment to be given further consideration. If yes, it's put into a queue for consideration and there is an in-depth discussion about the issue. The public is encouraged to participate at the study sessions and public hearing before the Planning Commission. The City Council makes the final decision.

Are private amendment requests in-line with the Comprehensive Plan?

If it's a private amendment then it's not in-line with the specific Comprehensive Plan designation for the property, hence the desire for the amendment. However, to be approved, the amendment needs to be in-line with the broader Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.

Does Kirkland have capacity to meet the housing and jobs growth targets or just the housing targets?

How did you determine capacity?

Kirkland has capacity to meet both the housing and jobs growth targets with its current zoning. There were two types of methodologies and analyses used to determine capacity. In one method, which was applied city-wide, we looked at whether a piece of property was less than 50% of value, deeming it likely to be redeveloped. We also looked at density per property. The other

method was used as an alternative only for Totem Lake, which is a designated Urban Center. With the alternative method, if the current density is 25% or less than what is planned, then there is capacity.

Is there an opportunity to rework the Everest and Houghton plans and have a shared discussion with neighborhoods about our shared business district?

It is not the intent of the City to make changes to the comprehensive plan and zoning designations for the business district without involving both neighborhoods, since the district is divided between the two neighborhoods.. Depending on what comes out of the breakout sessions, we will report back out in May or June regarding a potential course of action.

What is Kirkland's obligation in terms of the capacity for jobs and seeking to bring those jobs here?

The City of Kirkland is not likely to reach the target growth for jobs, nor is it obligated to reach those targets. However, the City is obligated to plan in a way that will allow the City to meet the target. If jobs come, the City needs to be prepared for that growth. With that said, the City can't control the market place.

Do we have to market the city to people and jobs?

We are not required to. We do have an economic development person that looks at these issues and does do some marketing.

Will the city incorporate finance and the environment into the Comprehensive Plan?

Yes.

Will you be working with regional partners?

Yes, but we don't have a specific plan of action at this time.

Does the City of Kirkland have affordable housing obligations?

Yes, affordable housing is a major consideration in our plans. We are obligated to try and reach targets for affordable housing.

The target for jobs is much larger than the housing target, whereas the existing numbers are balanced, why is that?

It's because the jobs are targeted for the Totem Lake Urban Center.

Why are Houghton and Everest meeting separately when we have so much in common?

For this round, we wanted to hear from each neighborhood individually. We may accommodate that situation in our next round of meetings and bring both neighborhoods together.

In terms of the Houghton business district, the future change showed a lot of bikes and walking. What concerns me is there will be two markets, one in Houghton and one in Everest and one will come and one will go away.

That is a great question to discuss in the breakout session.

Given the City of Kirkland has the highest density for its size in the area, what if we decide we don't want the projected growth?

If the City decides not to try and achieve the growth targets, that action could ultimately affect the revenue we receive from the State.

Is it unfair that our city is taking more future growth than other cities?

That's hard to say. The City will have to look at the numbers and see. One option would be to go back and try and change the targets if we think they are unfair.

Subsequent to the meeting, I reviewed the growth targets for other nearby cities and Kirkland's target are actually much less than Bellevue and somewhat less than Redmond and Renton, both of which have designated urban centers.

Don't we have the capacity for growth?

Yes.

Why do we need the Comp Plan to allow more density?

The Plan doesn't have to allow more density to comply with the Growth Management Act, that's a judgment for the future. We are required to look at the current plan and make changes for what we'd like the future of the city to be.

Who controls the growth rate in the city?

The total amount of growth is based on growth targets. The real-estate market decides the rate of growth.

Does the plan count Google's growth as part of the current job number or is it in the future target?

The existing Google development is not counted toward future growth. The project under construction is.

What's the reason behind this growth?

Growth is a regional phenomenon. Due to economic growth in the Puget Sound region, the four counties of King, Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap are expected to add 1.5 million more people by the year

2040. Kirkland is expected to absorb a share of the growth and our growth target was based on the fact that we have an urban center.

Why do we have an urban center?

The city nominated Totem Lake to be an urban center.

Why did the city make that nomination?

Transportation, specifically the ability to extend high capacity transit to Kirkland, is one reason.

The audience then broke up into their respective break-out session groups to have neighborhood-specific discussions.

Central Houghton Neighborhood break-out session

Dennis Sandstrom (Facilitator)

Angela Ruggeri (City of Kirkland, Senior Planner)

The facilitator welcomed the group, went over ground rules and introduced the City planner who gave an overview of the neighborhood plan and anticipated growth statistics. The facilitator then led the group in a discussion about neighborhood values and visioning and comparing the current plan to their vision. The Central Houghton discussion primarily focused on maintaining the current level of density. The specifics of the group's discussion are below:

Central Houghton Vision Discussion

- Well-maintained streets
- Diversity (age, ethnicity, etc.) as well as housing and economic diversity
- Many modes of transportation
- Mass transit and shuttles connecting other modes of transit to communities
- Freedom to do what they want with their property
- No change in size and less density
- More green areas in the neighborhood
- No above-ground power lines
- Energy and transportation sustainability
- Want it easy to get around the neighborhood and city
- Better views around corners
- Better and more street lighting
- Improved management of peak travel
- Better coordination between schools and the community

Plan Updates Discussion

- Establish or maintain a family and community-based business district
- Community space should be connected with Cross Kirkland Corridor
- Consider new gateways to the community
- The transitions between high and low density areas should be more gradual
- Add public art
- Highlight local history

- Enhance home business opportunities
- Maintain public views in major corridors
- Evaluate the balance and local street levels of service with the business district and community
- Limit density
- Reduce traffic on Northeast 108th Street and + Northeast 68th Street
- Don't mess with parks although consider small park improvement trails
- Make sure plan considers Northwest University's growth
- Ask that all developers have neighborhood response for their projects
- Multi-level buildings along Northeast 68th Street (homes, schools, etc.)
- Northeast 108th Street should be treated as a boulevard
- No cars in certain areas
- Business center should stay the same size
- Better parking management
- Property owners should maintain their sidewalks

Email comments were also received

- Email Comment: Feedback on the draft Houghton Neighborhood Plan Policy CH-5.3 and its organizational comments are below, indented after the relevant sentences:

A review of transportation impacts should be done for all new development in the Neighborhood Center.

HCC: Transportation improvements should be designed to handle additional traffic from the Neighborhood Center and to respect the integrity of the surrounding neighborhood.

PC: The PC suggested a rewrite of previous sentence to say: Transportation system improvements should be designed to encourage traffic to use existing arterials and to include traffic calming devices on neighborhood streets. Alternate modes of transportation should also be considered.

The above two paragraphs differ drastically in their intent and in their predictable outcomes:

HCC says, "do whatever it takes to handle the enormous additional traffic.

PC says, "try to deal with that traffic with "existing arterials" and other weak-kneed methods, which will clearly be inadequate to handle that enormous increase! (We already have speed bumps on 106th, which is the only possible bypass of 108th. Can you imagine speed bumps directly on 108th or 68th?? - there would be riots!) And regarding "alternative transportation

modes" (read: walking and biking) - in an aging community like Houghton, that would have virtually no effect."

Houghton Advisory Group: supports the Planning Commission wording for Policy CH-5.3. We Disagree!

Lakeview Neighborhood break-out session

Daniel Brody (Facilitator)

Janice Coogan (City of Kirkland, Senior Planner)

The facilitator welcomed the group, went over ground rules and introduced the City planner who gave an overview of the neighborhood plan and anticipated growth statistics. The facilitator then led the group in a discussion about neighborhood values and visioning as well as an exercise in comparing the current plan to their vision. The Lakeview discussion focused strongly on traffic impacts and pedestrian safety along Lake Washington Boulevard. Overall, they agreed that their current neighborhood plan reflected their 2035 vision, but hoped the city could review their identified points within the plan. The specifics of the group's discussion are below:

Lakeview Vision Discussion

- Increase width of sidewalks along Lake Washington Boulevard
- Ensure Lakeview is pedestrian friendly and walkable
- Hope that Lake Washington Boulevard does not increase congestion
- See traffic calming along Lake Washington Boulevard that diverts traffic onto I-405.
- Increase the amount of stop signs on Lake Washington Boulevard
- Add blinking crosswalks along Lake Washington Boulevard
- The SR 520 interchange is completed
- Prevention of long-term parking along streets
- Want to see the lake and mountains
- Maintain natural shoreline with parks that are easily accessible
- Encourage wildlife in the neighborhood
- Ensure there are ways for visitors to park and access the shoreline thoughtfully
- If an increase in density is required, ensure that new development maintains the neighborhood look and feel
- House signs and numbers are clearly designated and visible

Plan Updates Discussion

- Review sidewalk width requirements in plan, particularly for the area around the Transit center along 38th Place, south of Carillon Point
- Add encouragement to house numbers to be consistently placed for visibility, including the potential to light house numbers

- Ensure traffic calming measures are included that focus on slowing traffic speeds
- Attendees felt that the plan already allowed their 2035 vision to occur

Other Issues

- Ask that discretionary decisions by planning directors are based on neighborhood plans so that development and zoning align with the neighborhood vision

Everest neighborhood break-out session

Penny Mabie and Keri Franklin (Facilitators)

Paul Stewart (City of Kirkland, Planning and Community Development, Deputy Director)

The facilitator welcomed the group, went over ground rules and introduced the City planner who gave an overview of the neighborhood plan and anticipated growth statistics. The facilitator then led the group in a discussion about neighborhood values and visioning as well as an exercise in comparing the current plan to their vision. The Everest discussion focused mainly on traffic impacts and pedestrian safety along 6th Street. The specifics of the group's discussion are below:

Everest Vision Discussion

- Bigger trees
- More noise
- Trees and birds
- People on bikes on Cross Kirkland Corridor
- Increased property values
- Cross Kirkland Corridor – getting to the park and home safely
- More traffic
- Light rail by my house
- Houghton-Everest is a neighborhood center only two stories high.
- Wood is “attractive”
- Higher intensity use north of park
- Pre-school with kids art on display
- Preserve single-family residential
- Preserve wetlands/parks
- Preserve buffers to smooth transitions between Commercial and residential
- The current Plan represents what we like about our neighborhood and has the specifics we desire

Neighborhood Plan Updates Discussion

- Specify desired character in plan
- Walkability
- Single-family residential

- Buffers with no gridlock
- Office/commercial space stays “in character” for Houghton-Everest with a maximum two story limit
- Keep neighborhood services (e.g. Grocery, restaurants, gas station, pet store) will help make the neighborhood walkable
- Don’t turn retail into dentist space etc. In other words, things people use once or twice a year
- Control volume of traffic
- Everest is a limited area because it’s bordered by the freeway
- The Railroad Avenue trestle intersection is dangerous
- Please remove/remodel the trestle
- The intersection of Northeast 85th Street and I-405 is dangerous. Please reduce the number of accidents
- Keep building heights at 25 feet
 - Because some adjacent land use has no buffer
 - Higher heights blocks lake views, for example Google
- Retain and or preserve biking and walking view corridors
- Improve the Ode Avenue to Railroad Avenue sidewalk on Kirkland Way. This will improve walkability
- Residents want to use Kirkland not go to Bellevue. The issue is access and parking
- Kids and safety on 6th Avenue is a concern
- To improve walkability:
 - The pedestrian crossing over I-405 at the top of Kirkland Avenue has lots of kids, and some of the problems include:
 - Problems with limited sightlines. Please remove the foliage.
 - There are no lights on the street
 - Sidewalk ends in random places
 - Please repair the sidewalks
 - On the east side of 6th Street South please bury utilities and remove garbage
 - Align bus stops with crosswalks, for example at 6th Avenue South
 - Cross Kirkland Corridor crosswalks are not appropriate in some places
 - Increase lighting for safety
 - Walking up the street is not safe from 6th street to 7-11
- Manage competing use such as pedestrians, busses and cars with Google growth

- Business perspective:
 - Keep small business on 6th Street
 - 6th Street traffic is a nightmare because of freeway exits
- The 6th Street South road is terrible for motorcycles; please provide longer-lasting and better quality construction for roads and infrastructure
- Concerned more multi-family use will make traffic worse
- Look at parking on 6th Street by shopping center
- Concerned about industrial traffic
- Zone for multi-family or office not industrial
- Traffic is also an issue in “intimate” parts of the neighborhood, particularly during baseball season
- Turn the area along the industrial corridor into retail space facing the Cross Kirkland Corridor. For example, coffee shops etc.
- No neon signs in buffer facing residential area
- Transit discussion:
 - Think about the pros and cons of high-density light rail to corridor center
 - Question in-line freeway stations
 - Transit plans must address safety
 - Will light rail change and grow facility?
 - Is there pressure to support light rail
 - Are there plans to address noise impacts
 - Google brings more traffic pressure to support services
 - Have Google adopt “Microsoft Connector” System to limit traffic impacts. Could the City require this?
 - Transit, office and residential spaces needs to account for traffic impacts
- Ultimately more density equals more traffic infrastructure
- A lot of traffic goes through the neighborhood to avoid I-405
- Everest-Houghton neighbor center:
 - Must have joint discussion with Houghton before any changes occur to zoning
 - There needs to be better access from Cross Kirkland Corridor
 - There should be two story maximum height limits
 - We want retails shops to go to; for the neighborhood to use

Plan Update Priorities Discussion

A priorities list developed by pre-work of the neighborhood association was read to the group by Anna Rising. The list included the following:

SUBURBAN CHARACTER: Preserve the current suburban character of the Everest neighborhood, reserving urban zoning and development for more appropriate areas of the city.

HOUGHTON/EVEREST NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER: Before ANY zoning changes are implemented that affect the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center, invite Everest residents to review potential zoning changes and comment. It is important that we are part of this process, and that we are given ample time to study and provide feedback.

HOUSING: Keep the current zoning in the residential/single family areas in Everest. Any alternative housing has to be in character with current zoning.

PROTECT THE BUFFER: Protecting the buffer between single family homes and the adjoining areas with low density office or housing is a key factor in maintaining our neighborhood character. These buffers include the area along 6th St S, 68th and the area north of Everest Park between Railroad Ave and Kirkland Ave, and should continue to have height restrictions of 25 feet.

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation and transportation infrastructure remain a top concern to our residents. Incorporate measures that will allow for improved access to 6th Street S and 68th during heavy traffic periods without disrupting the general flow of traffic. Encourage and provide access to and transportation on the CKC. Identify and ameliorate safety issues at hazardous areas in Everest.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: Continue to protect Everest Park and the wetland areas.

One additional priority was mentioned to augment the above list:

- Add traffic

Email comments were also received:

- A number of email comments were received reiterating support for the above priorities articulated by Anna Rising on behalf of the Everest neighborhood.
- Email Comment: After reading the Everest Neighborhood Plan for 2035, I find most of it to be quite reasonable. I would ask, however, that you carefully consider the impact on quality of life in this neighborhood before you increase density, particularly around the intersection of NE 68th Street and 6th Street South. For example, a couple of years ago Kirkland "solved" (well, sort of solved) the problem of rush-hour congestion at this intersection by adding a curb lane for right-turning vehicles. Please do not unsolve this congestion problem by allowing increased density at or near this intersection. The Growth Management Act might dictate that every

community must accept increased density and growth, as a way to prevent unwanted development in currently rural areas. But you need to focus on the optimum. If you increase density and growth too much, you degrade quality of life and exacerbate social problems. I do not want that to happen in Kirkland, or anywhere else.

- Email Comment: I am a resident of the Everest Neighborhood living at xxx 8th Street South. Since I will not be able to attend the meeting at the city hall tomorrow (Tuesday) evening, I wanted to indicate that I agree with the outcome of the discussions that have gone on at the neighborhood planning meetings for Everest. I am most interested in keeping the neighborhood residential, preserving the wetlands and parks and controlling the development of the business district.