

Background and purpose of meetings

The City of Kirkland hosted the second series of four neighborhood planning workshops during the months of May and June. The City hosted the first set of workshops in January and February. The meetings in January and February focused on helping neighborhoods identify issues with their existing plans (or principles for new plans) as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan update process. The purpose of this series of meetings is to:

- Report back to neighborhoods on the City's response to issues and suggested changes or additions to existing neighborhood plans.
- Further explore how shared business districts might change in the future.
- Further explore issues from the first set of meetings that need clarification or additional thoughts.

The City hosted the second meeting in this series on June 4 at Lake Washington High School (12033 NE 80th St) from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. Neighborhoods in attendance included South Rose Hill, North Rose Hill, Bridle Trails and Totem Lake. These neighborhoods share common boundaries and business districts.

Approximately 30 people attended the meeting.

Upon signing in, staff gave attendees a meeting agenda and copies of transcribed notes from the first workshop organized by neighborhood and theme. Staff also gave attendees transcribed notes that focused specifically on transportation and parks and open space related issues. The purpose of these materials was to give attendees the opportunity to review comments from the first workshop and get feedback on comments and issues that needed further clarification and additional insight.

Introductions

Dennis Sandstrom (facilitator) welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced staff, reviewed the agenda, and discussed the format of the meeting. He gave a brief synopsis of the first workshop and outlined the goals of this meeting. Dennis noted that following the discussion on the City's response to the first workshop's comments, there would be a break where attendees would have the opportunity to review and provide comments and questions on wall exhibits that highlighted comments, issues, and themes from the first meeting specific to North Rose Hill, South Rose Hill, Bridle Trails, and Totem Lake.

Response to first meeting's comments

Overview presentation

Eric Shields (City of Kirkland, Director of Planning) started this discussion with an overview presentation. In addition to the objective of the workshops and key themes from the first meeting, the presentation focused on the schedule for updating the Comprehensive Plan including updating the general elements of the plan such as land use, economic development, and housing; selecting Citizen Amendment Requests for study; and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The presentation also

touched on comments and themes from the first meeting and the City's response to those comments and themes.

Transportation opportunities

Don Samdahl (Principal/Senior Project Manager, Fehr & Peers) continued the discussion with a presentation on transportation. Don's presentation highlighted the goals of the Transportation Master Plan, gave an overview of trends in vehicle miles traveled and changes in transportation priorities, and illustrated how planners consider how well streets connect housing with local businesses and other community assets. The presentation concluded with an examination of how the City can find the right balance of land use and transportation projects.

Walkability

Jeremy McMahan (City of Kirkland, Planning Supervisor) concluded with a presentation on the 10-Minute Neighborhood concept. This concept is based on a person's ability to walk 10 minutes from where they live to where they go to school, work, shop, and play. The City of Kirkland is currently developing a tool to map things that contribute to walkability such as proximity to destinations and how accessible are those destinations (how does a person get there).

One output of the tool is a heat map. The heat map shows areas in Kirkland that are more or less walkable by overlaying attributes such as parks, schools, and sidewalks. Most importantly, the map shows where connection gaps exist. One goal of the tool is to help identify where growth could occur, help the City prioritize where capital improvements should be made, and highlight where pedestrian connections can be improved.

Question and answer session

Attendees asked City staff questions and gave comments about the overview, 10-Minute Neighborhood concept, and presentation on transportation opportunities. Comments and questions covered a range of topics, and are provided below. Answers to questions by City staff are noted in italics.

Are you in charge of building new roads?

Yes, the City is responsible for building and maintaining city streets.

I have never seen you meet the community's needs. No one from the City asked me about widening the road by my house, now I can't get out of my home.

We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate the feedback. This is the type of feedback we could consider with the Comprehensive Plan update process.

What is happening with the I-405 construction project and how will it impact NE 80th Street and NE 75th Street?

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is adding one new lane in each direction between NE 6th Street and SR 522 in order to add a new express toll lane from Bellevue to Lynnwood. This means an additional lane will be added near NE 85th Street.

Who makes the decision about noise abatement from I-405?

While the city has some input, ultimately WSDOT makes the decision on who gets a noise wall.

How does the city plan capital projects in the long term? The three new neighborhoods lack input and have no neighborhood plans.

The City is currently working with these new neighborhoods on the development of neighborhood plans; they are also working with us on this process to identify potential updates to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). We encourage and value their participation.

Has the city accounted for walkability? There is no sidewalk along NE 85th Street.

Thank you for your feedback; we will look into opportunities to improve the pedestrian facilities on this street.

Each neighborhood should consider the diversity of transportation modes when establishing sidewalks.

I have safety concerns with bikers on city streets; some bikers commit traffic violations by going out of the bike lanes.

The conflicts between drivers and bikers should be solved; people drive in bike lanes or do not pay attention to bikers when opening their doors after they park.

Break

Dennis instructed attendees to take a break and review the exhibits around the room concerning differing viewpoints, transportation issues, and comments from the first meeting. Attendees were asked to provide comments and questions on the exhibits, as well as mark which comments they liked with a sticker. For a detailed list of comments and questions please see the attached spreadsheet.

Business district discussion

Dennis and Eric led a discussion about the shared business districts in North Rose Hill, South Rose Hill, Bridle Trails, and Totem Lake. Business districts were a central concern and interest at the first workshop. Eric outlined what was heard from the first workshop including the different desires and viewpoints of the four neighborhoods. The purpose of this discussion was to capture the issues and concerns of all neighborhoods and address any disconnection between what is in the Comprehensive Plan, zoning, neighborhood plans, and what should be in the business districts.

Question and answer session

Dennis posed several questions for the group to consider and opened up the floor for discussion and questions. Comments and questions are provided below. Answers to questions and comments by City staff are noted in italics.

Redevelopment must consider water impacts, retention and runoff. What is the city's water plan?

The City is preparing a new stormwater management plan.

How is the city looking at the multi-story apartments on NE 116th Street? Is the city tracking the occupancy and traffic impacts?

The city does not track occupancy but we do track traffic impacts. Although we understand your traffic concerns, transportation needs must accommodate development, especially increased population and jobs. The City is working on a plan to manage any potential increases in traffic.

How will the City solve the problem of people waiting in traffic?

The Public Works Department has a traffic control program that monitors traffic flow. If you know of a particular spot, please contact us and we can investigate it.

Were there volunteers to help with monitoring traffic?

The Public Works Department would be responsible for organizing this group.

Can you give practical zoning incentives to grocery stores?

The City typically does not give preferential treatment to certain types of businesses, but has at times worked with developers on having them provide certain opportunities for businesses to be included in new buildings.

What do you think of Juanita Village losing their grocery stores?

We worked closely with the developer to bring in a grocery store, who gave great effort in recruiting a grocery store to fill that space.

How and to what degree is the City going to maintain neighborhood character?

First we need to define which characteristics of the neighborhood need to be maintained. The City has design guidelines for different commercial areas to identify the relationship of the businesses to the sidewalks and landscaping, etc.

Is the City going to retain horse farms on properties? These are a defining characteristic of Bridle Trails.

The City does have some regulations in place for retaining areas that are capable of housing horses, but the City cannot require horse owners to put their horses there.

Is ensuring diversity and affordable housing a priority in the redevelopment plan?

The City is mandated to provide some affordable housing and is constantly looking at different way to provide it.

People need to know where to go and whom to talk to. How do people find out who the best person to speak with at the City?

[Eric provided a brief orientation to City Hall, as well as directed people to the City's website to find more information]

Comments received during business district discussion

We don't want big businesses in Bridle Trails, but we may support local businesses.

We want low density in Bridle Trails, but higher density in commercial areas.

More density increases transit and encourages walkable sidewalks.

Higher density commercial areas allow more businesses.

Please add more parking to support future businesses.

We support four- to five- story buildings, but not seven stories.

Be careful of retention ponds.

Require the transfer station to provide recycling opportunities.

Restrict garbage trucks to NE 116th Street so they stop going down 132nd Avenue NE.

Close out

Janice Coogan (City of Kirkland, Senior Planner) outlined the next steps including upcoming Planning Commission study sessions. She also highlighted ways for people to stay involved with the project including attending future public meetings web links to Kirkland 2035 homepage and the Ideas Forum:

- www.kirklandwa.gov/Community/Kirkland2035
- www.IdeasForum.kirklandwa.gov