



CITY OF KIRKLAND
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2015

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM: PAUL STEWART AICP, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
ERIC SHIELDS AICP, DIRECTOR**

SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD/BUSINESS DISTRICT PLANS

Introduction

The topic of updates to neighborhood and business district plans has been on the Planning Commission retreat agenda for the past couple of years ([See Dec. 9 2014 Retreat Memo](#)). In addition it has been periodically discussed at joint meetings with the City Council, it was part of the Comprehensive Plan update amendments, and it was a principle item of discussion at a joint meeting with the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods (KAN) on [October 22, 2015](#).

KAN representatives expressed interest in the following regarding neighborhood plans:

- Define terms and establish a schedule of Neighborhood Plans.
- What is the benefit of a neighborhood plan.
- Neighborhood Plans prioritized over the requests such as PAR/CAR
- Specific input on neighborhood plan process.
- Strengthen neighborhood plan enforcement (fewer developer amendments or variances)

The Comprehensive Plan set up the framework for neighborhood/business district plans in the "Implementation Strategies" chapter. This approach was suggested by Councilmember Arnold following the Planning Commission's recommendation on the entire plan. The main thrust of these strategies is to update these plans at least once between every two major Comprehensive Plan updates. The next major plan update would be due in 2023. The Implementation Strategies also call for a schedule for neighborhood plan updates by December 2016.

Below are relevant sections from the Implementation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Neighborhood Plans. The plans for Kirkland’s 15 neighborhoods are an important part of the Comprehensive Plan. Each Neighborhood Plan should be reviewed at least once between every two major Comprehensive Plan updates or more frequently as needed given City Council priorities and available resources, both to maintain their currency and to bring them into compliance with the more recently adopted Plan Elements.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

- ◆ NP.1: Update neighborhood plans and business district plans at least once between every two major Comprehensive Plan updates or more frequently as needed, given City Council priorities and available resources.
- ◆ NP.2: Establish a neighborhood plan update schedule by December 2016. Updates should occur by synchronizing the schedule with adjacent neighborhoods based on shared business districts or other shared features so that the process is conducted efficiently and common elements are addressed effectively.
- ◆ NP.3: Consider creating a set of city-wide neighborhood plan policies.
- ◆ NP.4: Develop a comprehensive template for future neighborhood plans that provides a framework for policies addressing the possible range of issues unique to each neighborhood, recognizing that not all template items will be applicable to all neighborhoods. The intent is to make the neighborhood plans concise and streamlined.

Planning Work Program Tasks – Neighborhood and Business District Plans

Two neighborhood/business district plans are underway and are noted on the draft Planning Work Program – the Finn Hill Neighborhood Plan (Task 2.1) and the Everest/Central Houghton Neighborhood Center plan (Task 2.2). Task 2.5 is a place keeper for work on selected neighborhood/business district plans in 2017 following the completion of the Finn Hill and Everest/Central Houghton plans.

Task 2.4 on the Work Program specifically targets the timing to determine the schedule and framework for future neighborhood/business district plan updates. This task would begin in mid-2016 to be completed by the end of the year. This proposed timing is recommended due to staffing levels

dedicated to other work program tasks that will be undertaken earlier in 2016.

Staff would anticipate study sessions with the Commission, meetings with KAN and briefings before the City Council regarding the framework approach. A number of issues will need to be addressed with stakeholders that strikes a balance among various interests regarding such things as timing, approach, groupings, resources and level of effort. For example:

- Some neighborhood plans have not been updated for over 25-30 years. How extensive up an update is needed (Note: most neighborhood plans were partially revised with the Comprehensive Plan update).
- What should the framework or template look like for neighborhood and business district plans?
- What lessons can we learn from the Finn Hill Neighborhood Plan and the Everest/Houghton Neighborhood Center Plan?
- How should the various neighborhoods and business districts be grouped and what process and criteria should be considered (common features, shared business districts, transportation corridors, etc.)?
- What is the appropriate schedule for the updates?
- What are appropriate public outreach and engagement strategies?

The retreat is a good opportunity to begin this discussion on the questions noted above or identify other considerations that should be addressed when this task begins.

The Planning Commission received an e-mail from Lisa McConnell (co-chair of KAN) to the Planning Commission dated November 12, 2015 expressing KAN's recommendations regarding neighborhood plans (see attached).

From: Lisa McConnell [mailto:lisaamcc@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2015 3:33 PM
To: Planning Commissioners <PlanningCommissioners@kirklandwa.gov>
Subject: KAN recommendations for work program

Dear Commissioners,

I'd like to thank you again for having the discussion with KAN reps at your October 22nd meeting. As was suggested at that meeting, KAN would like to make a few suggestions for items to be included in your 2016-2018 planning work program. Specifically, we'd like to address Neighborhood Plan update scheduling in 2016 (see NP.2 below) and scheduling of some of the other Implementation Strategies (also below)

Implementation Strategies

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

NP.1: Update neighborhood plans and business district plans at least once between every two major Comprehensive Plan updates or more frequently as needed, given City Council priorities and available resources.

NP.2: Establish a neighborhood plan update schedule by December 2016. Updates should occur by grouping neighborhood plans around shared business districts or other common features so that updates are based on larger geographic planning areas.

NP.3: Consider creating a set of city - wide neighborhood plan policies.

NP.4: Develop a standard template for future neighborhood plans that provides a framework for policies addressing neighborhood issues unique to each neighborhood. The intent is to make the neighborhood plans concise, streamlined and brief.

Our Recommendations

1. NP2 (SCHEDULING) should be the priority item for 2016. When putting together a timeline for Neighborhood Plan Updates KAN requests that several key issues be kept in mind.
 - a. Enough time should be allowed for a full process and there is value in the process of updates, not just in the end product. Especially in the first iteration of the Neighborhood Plan update cycles, there will be a high learning curve and a need for education, to allow residents time to become familiar with the planning process and language. We have many residents who are new to Kirkland (recently annexed or recently moved here) as well as many longtime residents who have not done a Neighborhood Plan because it has been a long time between updates. We all hope to achieve an efficient and effective update process. But especially in this first round of update cycles, KAN would much rather have an Effective process, even if it is at the cost of efficiency.
 - b. KAN disagrees with grouping neighborhoods with the goal of having updates based on larger

geographic areas. We do see advantages of having neighborhoods that share common features (business areas, shorelines, critical areas, large parks, or transportation features like I405, bus routes, major arterials/corridors) share a common meetings to learn and discuss these features.

c. Neighborhood Plan updates should begin with discussion of the neighborhood and culminate in the business district, not the other way around. Residents first discussing how it sees the neighborhood and its components greatly informs the discussion of the major development and economic item in their neighborhood.

d. KAN would like any transportation corridor studies for a particular neighborhood to be scheduled prior to the update as much as possible. This will help to link land use decisions to transportation issues and solutions, making for much better development and hopefully increased satisfaction with the planning process.

2. NP.1 (16 YEAR CYCLES) As mentioned at the joint meeting, KAN recommends doing half the neighborhoods in 1 comp plan update cycle and the other half in the alternating cycle. First cycle should be those neighborhoods: 1. currently scheduled for looking at business areas (Everest, South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails), 2. Finn Hill as they are already in process 3. that have not had "recent" updates 4. those that have a transportation corridor study

3. NP.3 (CITY WIDE POLICY) and NP.4(FRAMEWORK) should be done AFTER the Houghton Everest Neighborhood Center and Finn Hill Neighborhood Plan processes are completed and analyzed. These two implementations might best be pushed out until mid 2017 to 2018.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa McConnell
KAN co-chair

Sent from my Windows Phone