



## ***1.0 Executive Summary***

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The land between downtown Kirkland and the waterfront has held Lake Washington, several mills, a ferry landing, and now a park, dock and public parking. Community eyes are now focused on this prime location to connect downtown and the waterfront by creating a civic place and destination that reflects the spirit of Kirkland.

This document chronicles the work completed between January and October 2004. The work began with Guiding Principles, a list of activities and uses, and a vision from the Downtown Strategic Plan to:

*'Bring downtown to the lake – bring the lake to downtown'*

Of the many important comments offered during the design process, one resonates and captures the importance of what Kirkland currently is and what Kirkland should be:

*'When completed Lakeshore Plaza should look as if it has always been there'*

### 1.1 A New Civic Center for Kirkland

Lakeshore Plaza will be the *destination* in the City for residents and visitors in Kirkland. The Plaza will be the civic space for community events but also accommodate intimate picnics and downtown strolls. The Plaza will be a vital part of Kirkland's downtown with year round spaces that support public use and encourage complementary private development.

The project creates a large plaza, level with Lake Street and Central Way, with gardens, pavilions, fountains, and walkways.. These amenities cover a new parking structure that accommodates both the existing parking and new parking to support additional Plaza uses. A grand staircase, amphitheater, ramps, and elevators seamlessly connect the higher Plaza to Marina Park. Primary upgrades to the Park include a promenade, expanded lawn, and enhanced shoreline and dock facilities.

The Plaza will be a reflection of the community – art and history will be woven into the design including sculpture gardens and places for planned and impromptu community events.

Lakeshore Plaza has been envisioned to honor Kirkland's past, accommodate the current needs of the City, and anticipate its future.

### 1.2 Guiding Principles for Lakeshore Plaza

The City Council and project stakeholders developed twelve principles to guide and serve as touchstones for the design of the Plaza. The guidelines are comprehensive and include a demand for consistency with other planning efforts, an inclusive public process, and the creation of place for all residents.

The Guiding Principles, in **bold**, are listed below with the proposed outcomes in *italics*:

- **Maintain consistency with the vision of the Downtown Strategic Plan (DSP).**  
*The marquee strategy identified in the DSP is to "celebrate Kirkland's waterfront setting by reorienting downtown to the lake". The Lakeshore Plaza project should fulfill this community vision while keeping the overall vision for the downtown in focus.*
- **Develop a vision and plan around broad community consensus and support.**  
*The project is the confluence of many community interests. Careful balancing of those interests and a thoughtful approach toward community involvement and ownership will yield a plan that is broadly embraced by the community.*
- **Create a concept that reflects downtown's unique character and its commitment to the arts.**



*Lakeshore Plaza should respect and strengthen its setting in a community defined by its human scale, its pedestrian friendly environment, and its commitment to the arts.*

- **Serve to enhance and enlarge Marina Park.**  
*Lakeshore Plaza should be an obvious extension of Marina Park rather than an encroachment or detriment.*
- **Design a place that comfortably accommodates its users.**  
*Lakeshore Plaza should be a family oriented place that is safe and secure for all ages and interests. The design should overcome the constraints of weather encouraging activity during all seasons.*
- **Create a place that is “owned” by the entire community.**  
*Lakeshore Plaza should be the premier gathering place for the Kirkland community. As such, it should be inclusive of all interests and ages.*
- **Promote environmentally sound solutions.**  
*The project should be respectful of applicable environmental issues and should incorporate best available solutions to those issues. Lakeshore Plaza should preserve the community's ability to appreciate the natural setting.*
- **Create a project that is economically feasible and sustainable.**  
*Project planning should consider the economic feasibility as a project and should consider the sustainability of the project in terms of revenue opportunities, tourism potential, and how it supports and enhances the downtown retail setting.*
- **Pursue opportunities to increase the supply of public parking.**  
*The project should add to the supply of public parking to support the waterfront as a destination.*
- **Pursue design solutions that create connections rather than barriers.**  
*The project should be an integrating element between Marina Park and the built environment of the downtown. Careful thought should be given to linkages, transitions, and edges to create the seamless connection envisioned in the DSP.*
- **Minimize disruption of existing downtown activities.**  
*Both during construction and operation, the project should be designed and phased to minimize significant disruption to downtown activities, including retail trade, residents, park users, pedestrian activity, and special events.*
- **Strengthen and promote retail activity in the downtown.**  
*The project should be conceived as part of the overall downtown revitalization and an asset that improves Kirkland's retail climate.*

### 1.3 The Community Process

The City's commitment to the project included a thorough public process and inclusive community engagement including the City Council, Park Board, Downtown Action Team (DAT), Lakeshore Plaza Working Group (LPWG), Cultural Council, and neighborhood, business, and property owner groups.

An open and deliberate process of presentations, review and comment, and revisions shaped the project. The meetings strengthened and refined the design to reflect the goals and needs of the community

The first public meeting, March 2004, solicited opinions on appropriate character, long term vision, and uses.

The second public meeting, May 2004, asked attendees to select elements and approaches from two alternatives that would be crafted into a preferred plan.

The final public meeting, July 2004, presented the work to date, a preferred alternative, and asked for final comments.

Concurrent and subsequent to the public meetings were meetings with other project stakeholders.



At the close of this phase of work, Concept Design, the community process will continue to inform the future design and work of the project.

#### **1.4 Financial Analysis and Project Funding**

An analysis of costs and funding was integral to the design process. Preliminary studies determined opportunities for revenue based upon retail options and projected costs based upon design and uses.

As the design options were refined and qualities were identified, additional financial analysis was done to evaluate design alternatives.

The final concept plan is presented in this document with a thorough analysis of “best case” and “conservative case” outcomes. The results of this analysis are encouraging as they demonstrate that the project contains significant sources of potential revenue to offset the cost of key public improvements.

#### **1.5 Summary Recommendation**

The Downtown Action Team recommendation can be summarized as:

- The project has generated a great deal of community enthusiasm
- The project appears to be financially viable
- Significant issues remain:
  - Adjoining private properties:
    - Code issues
    - Development partnership opportunities
    - Appropriate specificity of integrating design standards
  - Development and construction alternatives
  - Management structure for project, including role of adjoining owners
  - Need to affirm parking and retail demand/revenue projections
  - Evaluation of financing options
- Request authorization to commence next level of project planning
- Request project budget of \$150,000 for 2005 and \$50,000 for 2006
- The City and DAT will continue to inform and solicit comments from the public and project stakeholders throughout the next steps and beyond.

#### **1.6 Next Steps**

Beyond Council approval of the Concept Plan and work in this document, the City and the Downtown Action Team expect to spend up to 18 months with continuing studies of the site. This includes refinement of key design and code compliance issues, completing market analysis for revenue components, development of a detailed finance strategy, and geotechnical review. The goal is to develop a level of confidence in a design and finance concept that will lead to preparation of a Request for Proposals for development partners to build portions of the project.

