



CITY OF KIRKLAND
PLANNING AND BUILDING
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Adam Weinstein, AICP, Planning and Building Director
David Barnes, LEED AP, Senior Planner

Date: March 30, 2026

Subject: **2026 Earth Month Proclamation**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Mayor proclaims April 2026 as “Earth Month” in the City of Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Staff recommends that the Mayor proclaims the month of April as “Earth Month” in Kirkland.
- By proclaiming April 2026 as Earth Month, all community members are encouraged to learn more about how they can reduce impacts on the environment and help create a more equitable and sustainable environment now and for future generations.

BACKGROUND:

April of this year marks the 56th anniversary of the first Earth Day. This provides an opportunity to renew our commitment to the promise made by many Americans over half a century ago.

The City is dedicated to promoting sustainable change through various policies and regulations, and the work of interdepartmental teams, including many initiatives and programs housed in Public Works, Parks and Community Services, Planning and Building, the City Manager’s Office, and more. For many years, these departments’ subject matter experts have been working hard to lay the groundwork to develop and implement initiatives like the Sustainability Strategic Plan.

The sustainability efforts the City pursues protect our community and our future by addressing the challenges of climate change. The City’s best defense against climate change is to foster a resilient natural environment, plan thoughtfully, and engage with the community. Kirkland has a

long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship, as shown in the City Council's goal for a sustainable environment, which states:¹

Protect our natural environment through sustainable goals and practices to meet the needs of community members for a healthy environment and clean energy without compromising the needs of future generations.

DISCUSSION:

For many years, Council has made important policy and funding commitments related to environmental protection. Highlights of these accomplishments since 2020 include, but are not limited to:

2020

- Council adopted the Sustainability Strategic Plan,² a plan that explores specific actions that the City will undertake to support the identified priorities and prioritizes the action items in a clear implementation plan.
- Council adopted the Urban Forest Six-Year Work Program, which includes high-priority actions to enhance urban forestry programs and protection.

2021

- The City signed a new extended-term Green Direct contract³ with Puget Sound Energy that will provide clean, renewable electricity for City facilities and reduce carbon emissions.
- The City completed construction of 12 new electric vehicle charging stations for City Building Inspectors at City Hall. This action continues the City's earlier efforts to electrify the City's fleet and, combined with renewably sourced electricity, directly reduces pollution and carbon emissions in Kirkland.

2022

- Council adopted a major update of the tree ordinance that balances preservation of trees with development. The benefits of trees include enhancing stormwater management, increasing carbon sequestration, reducing urban heat islands, and fostering a more livable community.
- Council adopted the Active Transportation Plan update, which is intended to make walking, bicycling, and rolling safer.
- Council adopted code amendments to require major development projects, including most projects in the NE 85th Street Station Area, to meet the City's High Performing Building Code.
- Council adopted the City's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging 5-Year Roadmap, which the City continues to implement.
- Kirkland along with the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Mercer Island, and Redmond established the Eastside Climate Partnership and launched the Energy Smart Eastside (ESE) Heat Pump Program, which prioritizes equitable access to heat pumps for low to moderate income community members while educating and providing non-income qualifying rebates to all households.

¹ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/city-managers-office/pdfs/2025-2026-council-goals.pdf>

² <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Sustainability-Center/Sustainability-Strategic-Plan>

³ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Whats-Happening/News/City-of-Kirkland-Extends-Commitment-to-Renewable-Energy-for-City-Operations-to-Twenty-Years>

2023

- The City commissioned and delivered a community and government operations greenhouse gas inventory.
- The ESE Heat Pump Program provided six low-income families heat pumps at no cost and helped provide incentives and technical assistance for at least 22 families that installed heat pumps.
- A partnership with King County Housing Authority and Imagine Housing helped a combined 24 Kirkland Plaza affordable senior housing residents obtain complete energy efficiency retrofits and heat pumps to provide heating and cooling to continue to promote community resilience.
- Implemented a collaborative Eastside “Bring Your Own Cup” waste prevention campaign with City partners Bellevue, Bothell, and Redmond.
- The City signed onto King County’s Re+ Pledge⁴, which is a strategic plan to reinvent waste management by reducing landfill waste by 70%, targeting a circular economy, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.
- The City adopted an updated Surface Water Master Plan to guide the city’s work to protect our streams and lakes, reduce flooding, and maintain our drainage infrastructure.

2024

- The City adopted the 2044 Comprehensive Plan, which explicitly brought equity and sustainability into all of its elements. This effort also broadened the Sustainability, Climate and Environment Element to include a greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilience sub-element ahead of schedule.
- The City adopted the Transportation Strategic Plan, which identifies and sets goals for reducing vehicle miles traveled for vehicle trips beginning, ending, and/or travelling throughout Kirkland for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The “Bring Your Own Cup” initiative saved over 20,000 cups and lids from the landfill.
- Green Kirkland Partnership volunteers contributed 7,600 service hours across 28 parks; 5,642 new native plants were installed; and 9 new acres of natural area parkland were enrolled in restoration, impacting a total of 334 acres in Kirkland parks.
- ESE helped 19 low-income households obtain an energy efficient heat pump at no cost; helped 14 moderate-income households utilize a fuel switch incentive that significantly reduces the cost of a heat pump; helped 3 low-income adult family homes obtain a heat pump at no cost; and awarded 21 non-income qualifying incentives to homeowners.

2025

- ESE helped 36 low-income households and 13 adult family homes obtain a heat pump at no cost, assisted 14 moderate-income households with substantial instant rebates, and provided 41 instant rebates from manufacturers to non-income-qualified households. All of these homes now have energy-efficient electric heating and cooling that provides filtered air and supports healthy indoor air quality.
- The implementation of waste stations and durable dishes at “City Hall for All” for the first time allowed for precise waste measurement. With only 25.3 pounds of garbage collected, 22.2 pounds recycled, and 39.1 pounds composted, an impressive 79.26% of waste was diverted from the landfill. This metric not only highlights the success of the waste station program but also provides a benchmark for future improvements.
- The Solid Waste team reached out to over 165 businesses on compliance with the Organics Management Law, resulting in 23 businesses starting composting service. This expanded service resulted in over 77,017 pounds of organic materials being diverted away

⁴ <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/waste-services/garbage-recycling-compost/solid-waste-programs/re-plus>

from the landfill and composted.

- Nine properties with 517 households participated in an eight-week waste reduction “Sort Smart Tournament” outreach program resulting in garbage being reduced by 37% or 1,578 cubic yards per year.
- The City adopted new and updated development regulations to promote more diverse housing types, including co-living, middle housing, accessory dwelling unit, and unit lot subdivisions. These changes expand the community’s ability to produce diverse, attainable housing types, increase housing choices for current and future residents, and will help to reduce environmental impacts through more efficient land use and more climate-friendly housing options.
- The City provided pollution prevention assistance to 149 businesses. This program offers guidance in stormwater best management practices, hazardous waste storage and disposal guidance, less toxic product replacement options, and spill prevention and preparedness. Assisted in a regional collaboration to create a multilingual stormwater pollution prevention training video for business staff in six languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Ukrainian.
- City staff responded and conducted clean-up actions at 179 spills.
- Staff conducted surface water bacterial source tracing, which detected leaking sewage and prompted regional sewer infrastructure repair.
- The City provided stormwater pollution prevention educational messages at Muir Elementary, Kirkland Middle, and at Peter Kirk Park for the Umbrella Fringe Festival. Rainworks⁵ is a temporary, non-toxic, “invisible” art that appears when it rains.
- The Green Kirkland Partnership encompassed the following: 1,845 volunteers, 8,909 volunteer hours, 60 Active Stewards, 175 volunteer events, 4,772 native plants installed, and 337 total acres enrolled in restoration.
- Council added over 2.3 acres of land to the city’s parks system, protecting that land — and its trees and nearby wetlands and streams — in perpetuity.
- Parks and Community services added 46 permanent community garden plots to our system, including 6 ADA-accessible (Americans with Disabilities Act) beds.
- The City expanded and improved accessibility of Everest Park Playground, making outdoor play more inclusive.
- 8,392,945 gallons of lake water were used to irrigate 43 acres of waterfront parkland — reducing demand on the potable water system and keeping water resources closer to their natural source.
- The City applied over 113 cubic yards of compost and approximately 300 cubic yards of wood chips across parklands to enhance soil health, improve moisture retention, and protect soil systems.

NEXT STEPS:

The City will continue implementing its many sustainability projects and programs.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1 – Earth Month Proclamation

⁵ https://rain.works/?srsltid=AfmBOor8ltkb_mJx3UQ7pojwFOZZPg70dumg9ynaas4y2EgQ055A8Tf



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Earth Month April 2026

WHEREAS, the Kirkland City Council has set a goal to protect our natural environment through sustainable goals and practices, reducing carbon emissions, and equitably meeting the needs of all community members for a healthy environment and easy access to clean energy and clean water without compromising the needs of future generations; and

WHEREAS, Earth Month is a reminder that individuals and communities can make a difference by reducing energy use, electrifying homes and businesses, producing renewable solar energy, and reducing consumption and waste to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and support a resilient environment for people, plants, and animals; and

WHEREAS, environmental sustainability is also an equity issue as Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map indicators show that fossil fuel pollution and other toxic exposures impact vulnerable and socioeconomically challenged populations by increasing health risk factors; and

WHEREAS, the Kirkland City Council has committed to prioritizing funding for Sustainability Strategic Plan actions that advance equity, energy efficiency, public health, and a clean energy economy that supports a sustainable and resilient future; and

WHEREAS, the City adopted development regulations that align with Washington State priorities and encourage a diversity of housing through well-connected infill development, advancing a land use pattern that accommodates growth while promoting an equitable, welcoming, connected, and sustainable community; and

WHEREAS, numerous City programs across departments work to protect the environment, including water supply, wastewater and stormwater systems; development services, the Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan; special recycling events and waste reduction efforts; protection of streams, wetlands, and lakes; and the Green Kirkland Partnership's natural parkland restoration efforts that support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity and more; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland participates in regional environmental efforts such as the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council, the Eastside Climate Partnership, and the King County Cities Climate Collaborative to reduce carbon emissions and footprints, diminish environmental impacts, and promote sustainable practices.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims April 2026 as Earth Month in Kirkland, Washington, and calls upon all community members to take action to reduce their impact on the environment to achieve an equitable, sustainable, and resilient community.

Signed this 21st day of April, 2026

Kelli Curtis, Mayor