



CITY OF KIRKLAND
PLANNING AND BUILDING
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Adam Weinstein, AICP, Director of Planning and Building
Allison Zike, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning and Building
Scott Guter, AICP, Senior Planner
Louisa Yardley, Planner

Date: March 13, 2026

Subject: **Briefing on Housing on Faith-Owned Land Pilot Program**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council receives a briefing on current state requirements and regional approaches related to facilitating affordable housing development on faith-owned properties. Following the briefing, staff requests initial Council feedback on the preferred scope (focusing on the approval process for projects on faith-owned land), focus areas, and public outreach approach for developing a pilot program that would support housing on faith-owned land in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- This memorandum provides the City Council with background information on the Planning Work Program task focused on expanding housing opportunities on properties owned by religious organizations. It includes:
 - an overview of state requirements and summaries of programs adopted by the cities of Seattle, Bellevue, and Redmond;
 - key findings from a regional analysis of Bellevue's program and a national report featuring project examples;
 - a summary of Kirkland's housing needs and the Comprehensive Plan policies that support this work;
 - an outline of the project's proposed public outreach approach; and
 - two options for scoping the pilot program.
 1. Apply density bonuses/incentives to the entire property such as additional density and additional height if the proposal meets the criteria.
 2. Allow a Conditional Use Permit or development agreement to set the density and height if the proposal meets the criteria.
- Staff is seeking Council feedback on which project scope option to pursue and input on the proposed public outreach approach.

BACKGROUND:

State Requirements

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature adopted Substitute House Bill 1377,¹ codified as RCW 36.70A.545, requiring cities and counties to allow increased residential density for affordable housing developments located on property owned or controlled by religious organizations. This statute grants a religious organization a density bonus upon request if an organization undertakes a project where all of the housing is set aside for low-income households. During the most recent legislative session, this statute was amended through House Bill 1859² to further expand opportunities for the development on faith-owned land of affordable housing that serves low-income communities.

Under the updated law, cities and counties must grant a density bonus for qualifying affordable housing developed by a religious organization or an entity leasing the property, provided the following conditions are met:

- At least 50 percent of the units are reserved for low-income households (earning at or below 80 percent of median household income), or at least 20 percent are reserved for very low-income households (earning at or below 50 percent of median household income), with housing costs not exceeding 30 percent of household income.
- Affordability must be maintained for a minimum of 50 years.
- Compliance with all nondiscrimination requirements identified in the statute.
- Located within an urban growth area as defined in RCW 36.70A.110.
- Where applicable, the developer should coordinate with the local transit agency to ensure appropriate transit access and service.
- The religious organization or its lessee is responsible for all development related fees, mitigation costs, and other required charges.

The statute does not define what constitutes an “increased density bonus consistent with local needs,” leaving that determination to local jurisdictions. Additionally, cities may establish policies to require affordable housing developments to set aside more housing units for low-income or very low-income households than what is required under state law.

For Kirkland, these changes present both opportunities and obligations. The City will need to update zoning and policy frameworks to accommodate developments with partial affordability requirements, establish clear procedures for processing requests, and consider whether to require higher affordability set-asides when granting density bonuses. Additionally, policies must account for nonprofit or lessee participation and ensure all development-related costs are borne by the project sponsor. These updates will position Kirkland to comply with state law while advancing local housing policies.

¹ <https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1377-S.SL.pdf?q=20260401094400>

² <https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2025-26/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1859-S2.SL.pdf?q=20260331132232>

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Local Codes and Programs

Below is a summary of how local jurisdictions have updated their zoning regulations and programs to support affordable housing on faith-owned properties.

City of Seattle

In June 2021, the Seattle City Council adopted Ordinance 126384 (Council Bill 120081) to comply with RCW 36.70A.545, enabling increased density for affordable housing developed on land owned by religious organizations. The ordinance took effect in August 2021. Consistent with the 2019 state law, affordable housing projects in which 100 percent of the units are income-restricted may receive additional development capacity through floor area ratio (FAR) and/or height bonuses. The amount of bonus available depends on the underlying zoning.³ The figures below illustrate how Seattle applies FAR and height bonuses to affordable housing projects located on religious organization properties.

Table A for 23.45.550 FAR limits for development permitted pursuant to Section 23.42.055		
Zone	Base FAR	Maximum additional exempt FAR ¹
LR1	1.5	0.3
LR2	1.8	0.3
LR3 outside urban centers and urban villages	2.5	0.5
LR3 inside urban centers and urban villages	3.25	0.5
MR	5.0	0.5
HR	16	1.0

Footnote to Table A for 23.45.550
¹ Gross floor area for uses listed in subsection 23.45.550.B.2 are exempt from FAR calculations up to this amount.

Figure 1: The FAR bonus (or exempted floor area) granted to affordable housing on land owned by a religious organization per Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.45.550.⁴

Table B for 23.45.550 Structure height for development permitted pursuant to Section 23.42.055	
Zone	Height limit (in feet)
LR1	40
LR2	50
LR3 outside urban centers and urban villages	55
LR3 inside urban centers and urban villages	65
MR	95
HR	480

Figure 2: The alternative height limit for affordable housing on land owned by a religious organization per SMC 23.45.550.

³ The bonus increase is tiered based on the allowed development intensities in the underlying zone.

⁴ To view a larger version of FAR bonus and alternative height tables visit:

https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT23LAUSCO_SUBTITLE_IIILA_USRE_CH23.45MU_23.45.550ALSTDEAFUNPROWCOREOR

Seattle’s approach is simple and efficient for applicants and city officials to use for two reasons:

1. The density standards apply to all qualifying projects – they are not made on a case-by-case basis – and;
2. No Council approval is required.

City of Bellevue

In June 2023, the City of Bellevue adopted Ordinances 6743 and 6744 to implement the State adopted 2019 version of RCW 36.70A.545 through its Affordable Housing Strategy Action C-1 rezoning program.⁵ This program created an overlay district encompassing 36 faith-owned properties eligible for increased density when used for projects where all the housing is affordable. Eligible properties must meet all of the following specific criteria:

- Owned or controlled by a religious organization;
- Located in areas zoned single-family residential;
- Located within 500 feet of a land use district where multifamily housing or commercial uses are permitted; and
- Located on an arterial street or located in close proximity to frequent transit service.

Properties within single-family residential districts meeting these requirements are rezoned by adding an affordable housing suffix (AH) to the existing land use designation, allowing densities ranging from 10 to 30 units per acre based on nearby multifamily districts. Two projects are currently underway under this program. One project is a 100-unit affordable housing project at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church at 2650 148th Ave SE.^{6,7} Additional faith-based organizations have expressed interest. However, the overlay approach is selective, limiting eligibility to pre-identified parcels and excluding properties that may become faith-owned in the future or that are not located in “single-family residential” zones.

Compared to Bellevue’s program, the new State statute establishes broader and more flexible requirements. It lowers affordability thresholds from requiring 100 percent of units to serve low-income households, to required set asides of 50 percent or 20 percent of the total units (depending on affordability levels). The statute also shifts compliance from voluntary to mandatory by requiring cities to adopt implementing policies upon request, and it expands eligibility to organizations leasing faith-owned property. Unlike Bellevue’s selective overlay approach, the State’s framework allows any qualifying faith-owned site to access density bonuses as long as statutory affordability criteria are met. Overall, the State framework is likely to yield a more inclusive and scalable system than Bellevue’s targeted rezoning strategy.

City of Redmond

In 2025, the City of Redmond amended its affordable housing zoning code (RZC 21.20) to address RCW 36.70A.545.⁸ Redmond adopted a broader framework than Bellevue and one that closely aligns with Seattle’s approach. The code does not identify specific eligible parcels, nor does it propose any rezoning. Instead, when an affordable housing project meets state requirements, the city will grant a density bonus to the entire property on which the project is

⁵ <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/city-managers-office/office-housing/housing-affordability/increasing-affordable-housing-faith-owned-properties/affordable-housing-strategy-action-c-1-phase-2-faqs>

⁶ <https://www.nwrealtor.com/2024/10/23/bellevue-welcoming-affordable-housing-developers-with-new-incentives/>

⁷ <https://hoodline.com/2026/03/bellevue-pours-12m-into-church-lot-plan-for-100-family-homes/>

⁸ <https://redmond.municipal.codes/RZC/21.20.060.F>

located. This bonus allows up to twice the standard maximum density of the underlying zone and permits an additional story above the ordinary maximum building height. No conditional use or Council approval is required.

Regional Reporting and National Examples

HR&A Advisors and Imagine Housing: “Affordable Housing Development Potential In Bellevue and Eastside Communities”

Imagine Housing, a nonprofit affordable housing developer for East King County, partnered with urban development consulting firm HR&A Advisors to examine the potential for expanding density bonuses on faith-owned properties across the Seattle Eastside cities.⁹ The study identified more than 200 sites eligible for these bonuses, including 87 parcels larger than two acres. If Bellevue’s C-1 program were to be applied to other East King County cities and affordable housing were to be built on all of these sites, the region could produce between 5,500 and 9,000 new affordable homes.

One of the key challenges highlighted in the report is the limited financial capacity of many faith-based organizations, which often operate as nonprofits and lack the resources to fund large-scale development. The most substantial barrier is access to sufficient capital, as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), the primary financing mechanism for affordable housing, is a highly competitive and oversubscribed funding source that is insufficient on its own to cover project costs. According to the report, there is currently only enough funding to support existing 4% LIHTC projects, let alone new projects on the many new faith-owned sites to which RCW 36.70A.545 applies. A proposed solution is to allow mixed-income housing, which would generate revenue for property owners and reduce reliance on constrained LIHTC funding.

The HR&A Advisors and Imagine Housing report also outlines additional strategies to address financial, regulatory, and construction hurdles. These are summarized in Figure 3 on the next page. For the City of Kirkland, potential solutions include waiving permit fees, legalizing density bonuses for mixed-income developments, and implementing flexible design standards, among other measures.

⁹ <https://imaginehousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/HRA-Labs-Imagine-Housing-Final-Report-Feb-2025.pdf>

FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

Development of Affordable Housing on Faith-Based Land Requires More than Land to Close the Financing Gap.

- Develop Financing Sources to Support Mixed-Income Development
- Legalize Density Bonus for Mixed Income Developments
- Expand Subordinate Grants and Loans for LIHTC Projects
- Support Creative Deal Structuring

REGULATORY INCENTIVES

Tailoring Zoning Approaches to Unlock Faith-Based Housing Potential in Eastside Communities.

- Update and/or Codify Density Bonuses in a Manner that Reflects Needs of Each Community
- Implement Flexible Design Standards
- Reduce Parking Requirements
- Establish Accelerated Approvals
- Expand the Framework Beyond Faith-Based Land

CAPACITY BUILDING

Faith-Based Organizations Are Community Champions. They Need a Champion Throughout the Development Process.

- Facilitate Dialogue with Congregations Based on Community Needs and Priorities
- Address the Pre-Development Needs of Faith-Based Owners
- Pool Resources and Support for Cohorts of Faith-Based Organizations

Figure 3: Strategies for Supporting Faith-Based Affordable Housing. Source: HR&A Advisors and Imagine Housing Report.

The way a faith-based organization owns and transfers its land significantly affects the affordability of future development. Some organizations may choose to sell their property to a developer, while others might donate a portion or sell it below market value. Each approach can substantially reduce project costs and improve affordability, as summarized in Figure 4.

Type of Contribution	Description	Example
Donating the Land at No Cost	The denomination donates land entirely for affordable housing without any financial return.	The LDS Church donated land for affordable housing in Salt Lake City at no cost.
Discounted Sale	The denomination sells the land at a discounted rate to facilitate affordable housing development.	
Retain Ownership with Below-Market Lease	The denomination retains ownership of the land, leasing it at a below-market rate to make the development more affordable.	The Episcopal Church leases church land for affordable housing, enabling long-term control and affordability.
Selling at Market Rate with Flexibility on Timing	The denomination sells the land at or near market value but offers flexibility in payment schedules or financing to support affordable development.	

Figure 4: Financial Contributions to Create Affordability. Source: HR&A Advisors and Imagine Housing Report.

Beyond ownership, desired amenities and the organization’s presence in the completed development will differ by project. Some faith-based groups may want space for worship, offices, or other community functions within the new development. These considerations are important when collaborating with organizations and designing the City of Kirkland’s program.

American Planning Association: “Using Faith-Based Land for Affordable Housing”

The July 2023 Zoning Practice report by the American Planning Association, titled “Using Faith-Based Land for Affordable Housing,” explores how religious institutions can play a pivotal role in addressing the affordable housing crisis.¹⁰ The report reinforces many of the findings presented in the HR&A and Imagine Housing report.

Rising land and housing costs have made it increasingly difficult to develop affordable units, and faith-based organizations often own underutilized land, such as parking lots or expansion parcels, in established neighborhoods. This land represents a significant opportunity to reduce development costs, as land acquisition typically accounts for about one-third of total housing expenses.

Many congregations want to support lower-income households, and declining membership and financial pressures have often left them with surplus property. Internal challenges often follow, including limited real estate expertise, insufficient access to capital, and uncertainty about how best to repurpose their land. In response, some faith-based institutions have created dedicated roles or offices focused on transforming underused property into affordable housing. Cities have also stepped in by forming working groups to help faith organizations navigate redevelopment processes. Despite these supports, the report notes that land use and zoning regulations can still pose significant barriers to developing housing on religiously owned sites.

The report recommends several zoning reforms to unlock this potential. Local governments can allow housing as a permitted use on faith-owned sites, grant height and density bonuses for affordable housing, eliminate minimum parking requirements, and exempt projects from design standards. Examples of successful reforms include Bloomington, Indiana’s height bonuses for affordable housing; Buffalo, New York’s elimination of parking minimums; and Aurora, Colorado’s exemptions from costly design standards.

Ultimately, the report emphasizes that enabling affordable housing on faith-based land aligns with the missions of religious institutions and addresses critical housing needs. By adopting targeted zoning changes, local governments can transform underused properties into vibrant, affordable communities, creating a win-win for congregations and the broader public. The following are a few example projects highlighted in the report as successful examples of enabling housing on faith-owned land.

The first example, St. Paul the Apostle Senior Residence in Edison, New Jersey, is a 42-unit, age-restricted senior affordable housing development completed in 2021 on the former site of the Our Lady of Peace parish. The redevelopment plan underwent several public hearings, during which residents raised concerns about traffic, parking, and potential impacts on property values. Ultimately, the Municipal Council approved a plan to demolish the parish buildings and construct a 42,788 square foot, three-story facility featuring residential units, an activity room, a community room, and management offices. The \$11 million project was sponsored by Catholic Charities USA, Domus Corporation, and the Metuchen Community Services Corporation, with funding from a combination of local, county, and state sources, as well as private lenders and housing finance organizations.

¹⁰ https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Zoning-Practice-2023-07.pdf



Figure 5: St. Paul the Apostle Senior Residence. Source: *Zoning Practice*, July 2023, Vol. 40 No. 7.

The second example, Wesley Village in Orange County, California, is a three-story, 47-unit apartment complex serving families and seniors earning up to 60% of Area Median Income (AMI). Completed in 2017, the development repurposed 2.2 acres of excess parking and vacant land owned by the Garden Grove United Methodist Church. Jamboree, an affordable housing developer, entered into a 60-year ground lease with the church to develop the project. The project required a base zoning change and included community facilities such as a Boys & Girls Club, an Alzheimer's clinic, and a free medical clinic. The \$19.2 million project achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification and was funded through a combination of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Investment Partnerships Program dollars provided via a Community Housing Development Organization loan, along with contributions from private investors, banks, and housing finance institutions.



Figure 6: Wesley Village. Source: *Zoning Practice*, July 2023, Vol. 40 No. 7.

The third example, Aria Denver, is a 17.5-acre mixed-use development that transformed land formerly owned by the Sisters of St. Francis. The project includes over 500 residential units of varying types, townhomes, condominiums, affordable and market-rate apartments, cohousing units, and transitional housing, with 35 percent of units designated as affordable. The development required a zoning change and involved extensive public engagement to address community concerns. In addition to housing, the project features a one-acre farm and greenhouse, public open space, and 7,000 square feet of commercial space. Urban Ventures, a Denver-based developer, led the project with support from Habitat for Humanity and other community partners.



Figure 7: Aria, Denver. Source: Zoning Practice, July 2023, Vol. 40 No. 7.

These examples highlight several important lessons for Kirkland as we consider developing density bonus regulations for faith-based properties. First, successful projects often require flexible zoning provisions to accommodate new housing types and community-serving facilities. Second, strong partnerships with nonprofit organizations, housing developers, and service providers can significantly improve project feasibility and expand benefits beyond housing, including clinics, childcare, and open space. Finally, diverse and layered funding sources from local, state, federal, and private entities are essential to meeting high development costs. Incorporating these strategies into Kirkland's approach can help create a program that not only increases the supply of affordable housing but also strengthens community-serving uses and supports the City's 2044 housing goals.

Existing Housing Needs, Comprehensive Plan Policy Alignment, and ARCH Assistance

Housing Needs

The Washington State Department of Commerce has directed the City of Kirkland to plan for a 33 percent increase in housing units by the year 2044. This requirement includes accommodating at least 11,462 additional homes that are affordable to households earning at or

below 80 percent of area median income. Meeting these targets will require a range of strategies, including creating new opportunities for affordable and workforce housing on faith-owned properties.

The City's 2044 Comprehensive Plan establishes the policy framework needed to address these requirements. The Plan supports the development of regulations, incentives, and partnerships that expand housing choices and encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties, including those owned by faith-based organizations. These policies form the basis for the proposed zoning code amendments and the development of a pilot program to support faith-based housing.

Staff have identified 64 parcels in Kirkland that are owned by faith-based organizations (see Attachment 1). Approximately one-third of these parcels, totaling 19 sites, are two acres or larger and represent significant redevelopment potential. At least one congregation has already expressed specific interest in pursuing affordable housing. Salt House Church, located at 11906 and 11920 NE 80th Street, owns a combined 1.9 acres within the NE 85th Station Area. The property is zoned Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU), which allows a variety of residential and mixed-use development options. In addition, other congregations have met with City staff to discuss redevelopment concepts that could include affordable housing.

Comprehensive Plan Policies

Several Comprehensive Plan policies support enabling affordable housing on faith-owned properties, particularly those that promote mixed-use and infill development, equitable access to housing, and redevelopment of underutilized land. Allowing increased density on these sites advances these goals by creating affordable homes in residential areas where housing costs continue to rise and by supporting mixed-use projects that incorporate community-serving uses.

A key policy guiding this work is Housing Policy H 1.6, which states:

Create a program that allows faith-based, or other non-profit and community-based organizations, to create customized development regulations for their properties in exchange for providing substantial public benefits, including affordable housing. The customized regulations and associated public benefits must be considered by Planning Commission and ultimately approved by City Council on a property-specific basis. The City must provide comprehensive public notice to surrounding properties of any proposed changes and associated public benefits. Preference should be given to projects with deep levels of housing affordability that provide space for continued operation of the faith-based and other community organizations.

Policy H 1.6 directly supports the creation of zoning amendments and a pilot program that enables affordable workforce housing on faith-owned properties. It emphasizes customized development pathways, substantial public benefits, and preservation of community serving uses, principles that will shape the structure and evaluation criteria of the pilot program.

Together, these housing needs and Comprehensive Plan policies establish a clear foundation for the City's effort to enable more affordable and workforce housing on faith-owned sites. They will ensure that the code amendment and pilot program not only comply with state law but also advance Kirkland's long-term goals for equity, housing affordability, and neighborhood vitality.

ARCH Assistance

A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) has created a new Special Projects Manager position, funded in the 2025 ARCH budget through increased contributions from all member cities, including Kirkland. This position was established in response to the challenges faith communities and local governments often face when advancing housing projects on surplus or underutilized land, particularly where internal development expertise is limited. ARCH has hired Max Benson, who brings more than 20 years of experience in affordable housing development across Washington State, including work on surplus public properties and faith-owned sites.

The Special Projects Manager is intended to help “produce more housing faster” by providing direct technical assistance to religious organizations and cities, assembling best practices and project readiness tools, and supporting jurisdictions in evaluating surplus property and transit-oriented development opportunities. Max’s work is grounded in ARCH’s 2024 Strategic Plan, which identifies specialized support for surplus land evaluation, feasibility studies, zoning and incentive strategies, financing assessments, and development of Requests for Proposals as essential to accelerating affordable housing production.¹¹

For Kirkland’s planning effort, incorporation of this position brings several benefits. Max can evaluate and test the feasibility of zoning options under consideration, including various development typologies and financing structures, to determine their financial viability for affordable housing. ARCH can also assist faith-based organizations with early project preparation, including design team and developer selection, schedule planning, and analyses of financial feasibility, to help them move from concept to implementation. More broadly, Max remains available to provide information, feasibility services, and guidance for any faith community or property owner beginning to explore or actively pursuing housing development.

As part of this project, City staff will work closely with Max to develop effective zoning standards and incentive strategies to make it easier for faith communities to build affordable workforce housing on their properties in Kirkland.

Public Outreach

Public outreach for this project encompassed several meetings with local faith-based organizations in Kirkland which were at least preliminarily interested in developing affordable housing on their properties. It also includes a dedicated project webpage that provides information about the project, invites community feedback, offers an option to subscribe to housing-related email updates, and features a stakeholder questionnaire for faith-based organizations and affordable housing developers.¹² Staff will also draw on public input received during the Comprehensive Plan update when developing draft regulations and the pilot program.

Comprehensive Plan Public Comments

During the 2044 Comprehensive Plan process, community members provided extensive feedback on land use and housing policies. Most commenters supported increasing affordable housing and encouraged the City to take stronger action. Concerns generally focused on the potential impacts of increased density, including added traffic, overcrowded parks and services, and possible effects on nearby property values.

¹¹<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61687c3f7bc096461d80234/t/65fdf2a5aa7be01c18edb645/1711141563226/ARCH+Strategic+Plan+2024.pdf>

¹²<https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-and-Building/Planning-Projects/Housing-on-Faith-Owned-Land-Pilot-Program>

Similar themes are expected during this project's comment period. Because most faith-based sites are in low density residential zones, comments will likely center on how additional density may change neighborhood traffic patterns and character. Concerns about property values may also be expressed. At the same time, based on strong public support for affordable housing during the Comprehensive Plan process, staff also anticipate a significant number of comments expressing support for the work program, including from religious organizations who want to make better use of their land.

Pilot Project Scope Options

The City of Kirkland's initiative to support housing development on faith-based properties presents a significant opportunity to advance both local and regional housing goals and is also required by state law. By addressing regulatory barriers, evaluating available sites, and drafting clear and equitable zoning amendments, the City can establish a predictable framework that encourages effective partnerships with faith-based and nonprofit organizations. This effort will support compliance with RCW 36.70A.545 while advancing Comprehensive Plan objectives to expand housing options for households with the greatest need.

A pilot program informed by best practices from Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, the HR&A Advisors and Imagine Housing study, and national models can help ensure that new projects achieve deep affordability, preserve community-serving uses, and integrate well into walkable neighborhoods with access to transit, schools, and essential services. Taken together, these strategies will help Kirkland move toward its target of 13,200 new housing units by 2044, particularly for households earning at or below 80% AMI, while promoting equity, sustainability, and community resilience.

Based on the findings in this memorandum, staff has prepared two primary regulatory and pilot program options for Council consideration, which focus on the process under which projects on faith-owned properties may be approved.

1. Apply density bonuses/incentives to the entire property such as additional density and additional height if the proposal meets the criteria.
2. Allow a Conditional Use Permit or development agreement to set the density and height if the proposal meets the criteria.

Staff is seeking Council direction on the preferred scope and focus areas for developing the draft regulations and pilot program, with options detailed on the following page.

Option #	Code Amendment Option	Pilot Program Features	Required Development Approval Process	Staff Notes
1	Add new affordable housing incentives to KZC 112.25, i.e. density bonus and zoning flexibility, specifically for projects on faith-owned land.	Expedited building permit processing.	Development proposals use existing (updated) zoning allowances; process would require construction permits and design review, where applicable.	Similar to Seattle and Redmond approaches. This option may require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Policy H-1.6 as site specific review and approval by the Planning Commission (PC) and Council are not included in this option.
2	Establish a conditional use permit (CUP) process – similar to the City's Planned Unit Development requirements in KZC 125 – or create a development agreement pathway tailored to faith-owned properties.	Customized development standards and project-specific code and permitting assistance.	Development proposals apply for a specific land use approval tailored to faith-based ownership; process would require Council approval of a land use application, construction permits, and design review, if applicable.	Consistent with Policy H-1.6 but does not reflect recommendation of providing accelerated approval for housing projects on religiously owned properties, which has been identified as a best practice in staff's literature review.

Staff can also explore methods of providing financial support with either of these options to improve the feasibility of deeply affordable housing.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will brief the Planning Commission (PC) on this project on May 7, 2026. Following feedback from both the City Council and the PC on the project scope and public outreach approach, staff will begin drafting code amendments and program components. Draft regulations and the pilot program, along with a summary of stakeholder input, will be presented to the City Council at a future meeting with anticipated target for adoption in Fall 2026.

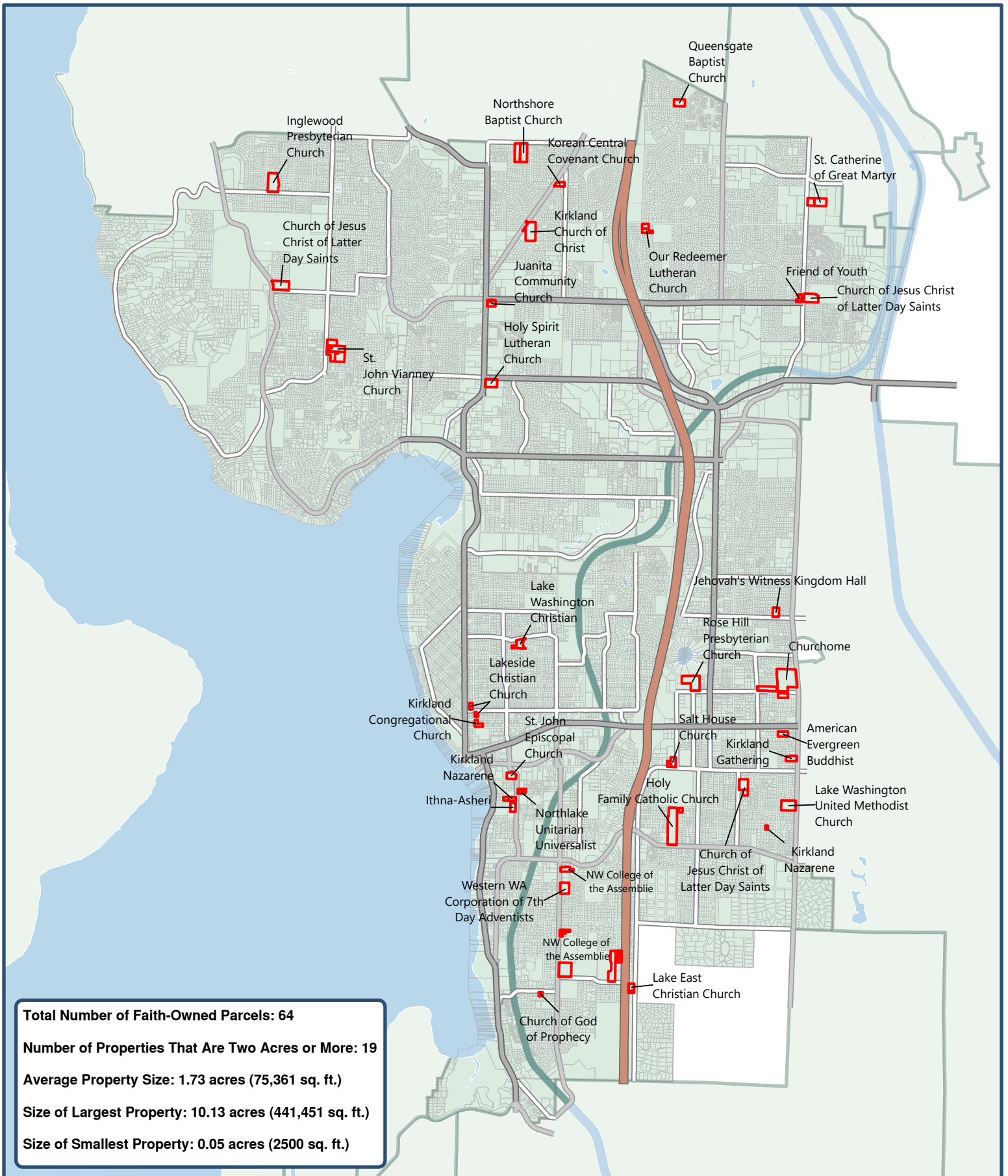
ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Kirkland Faith-Owned Properties Map



Kirkland Faith-Owned Properties

Attachment 1



Total Number of Faith-Owned Parcels: 64
Number of Properties That Are Two Acres or More: 19
Average Property Size: 1.73 acres (75,361 sq. ft.)
Size of Largest Property: 10.13 acres (441,451 sq. ft.)
Size of Smallest Property: 0.05 acres (2500 sq. ft.)

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Author: IT-GIS

Name: Kirkland Faith-Owned Properties

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