

## **XII.A. Public Services**

### **Purpose**

The Public Services Element addresses fire and emergency medical services, emergency management, police protection, schools, and libraries.

This Element establishes policies for the coordination of funding, concurrency, and level of service requirements set forth in the Capital Facilities Element. The Capital Facilities Element contains further explanation regarding the analysis of the need for capital projects to meet the level of service standards for public services.



Fire Fighters at Station 24

### **Vision**

The Public Services Element supports provision of public services to support existing and future growth and the correction and prevention of any existing deficiencies to ensure a safe community and high quality of public services.

Deficiencies may still exist for some services, but these can be addressed through appropriate planning, funding, and coordination with the appropriate service providers.



Park Lane in Downtown Kirkland

## **Existing Conditions**

### *City Services*

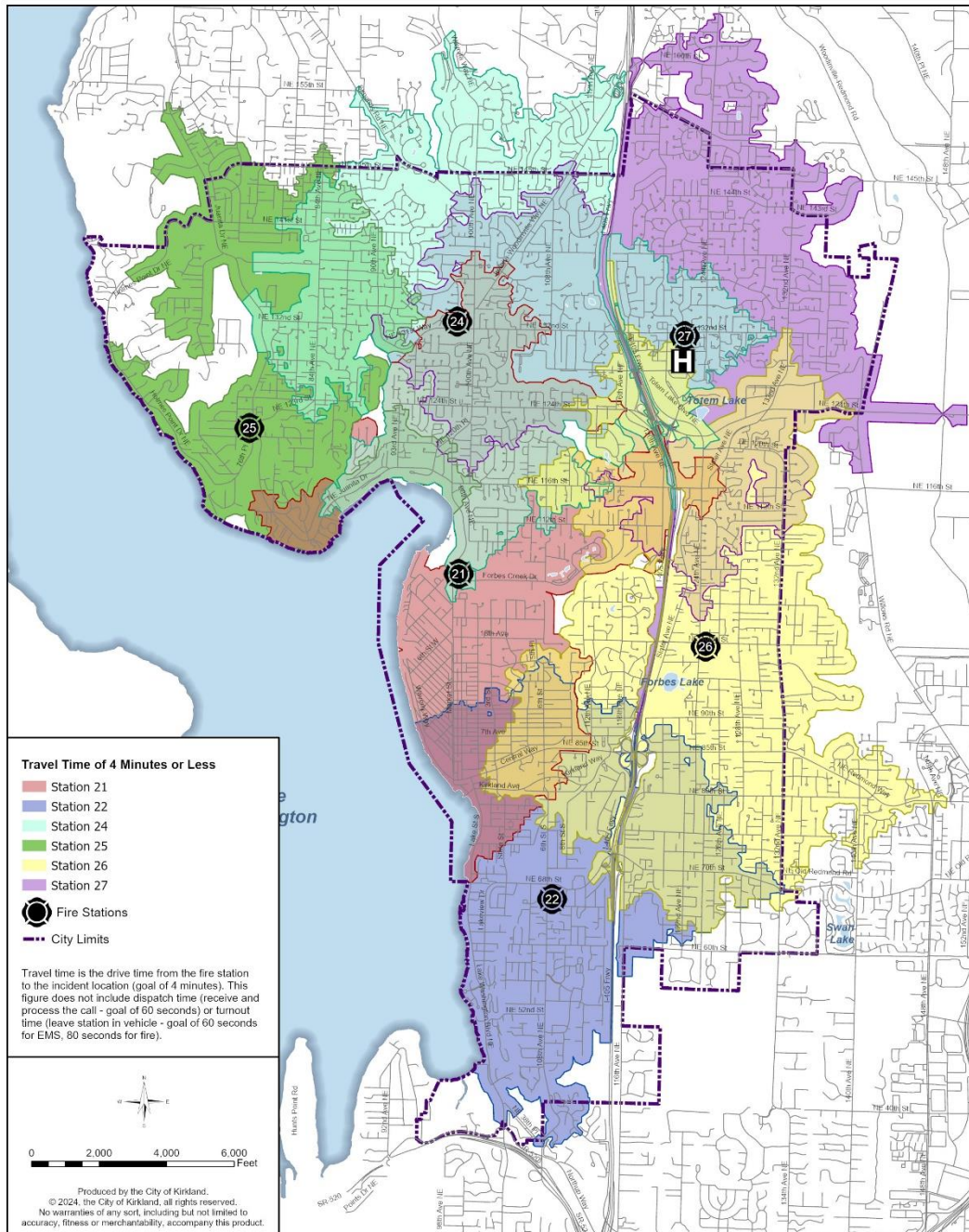
#### **Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services**

The City provides emergency response to fire and medical emergencies, fire prevention, and public education and participates in regional specialized response for hazardous materials, technical rescue, and paramedic services. Kirkland has automatic aid and mutual aid agreements for emergency response with other cities, the County, and the State. Fire station locations and fire and emergency medical services travel times are shown in Figure PS-1.

Limited areas of the City, primarily in the Bridle Trails and Finn Hill neighborhoods, do not meet the level of service standards for fire and emergency medical services (EMS). Specific capital projects to address these deficiencies are addressed in the City of Kirkland Fire Department's Strategic Plan and Fire Department Standards of Coverage and Deployment Plan. An example is Fire Station 27, which was relocated to the east side of Interstate 405 in 2024 to improve response times to Kingsgate, Totem Lake, and parts of North Rose Hill.

The Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Unit of the Kirkland Fire Department serves frequent EMS 911 callers, non-emergent medical issues, and patients with complex social needs. For information about the continuum of care for people experiencing homelessness, see the Human Services Element.





**Figure PS-1: Fire and Emergency Medical Services Travel Time within 4 Minutes**

### Emergency Management

The City provides readiness, response, and recovery services based on an all-hazards approach to disasters. Kirkland participates in regional and statewide response operations.

### Police Protection

The City provides traffic investigation, enforcement, and education; parking enforcement; patrol response to citizen calls for service; criminal enforcement; K9; special response teams; crisis negotiation team; investigations; crime analysis; explorers; crime prevention; community resource officers; record keeping; jail services; internal and external training; interlocal agreements for SWAT teams; explosives removal and other specialized services. The Police Department also maintains contracts for 911 communication services that serve as the public safety answering point for police, fire, and medical emergencies. The department also has mutual aid agreements with every law enforcement agency in the State. A Justice Center located in the Totem Lake area efficiently combines police, jail, and municipal court services in one complex.

### *Non-City-Managed Public Services*

Although the City does not operate these services, the City does have an influence on facility planning and development by its authority to regulate land uses and the requirement to adopt a comprehensive plan.

### Schools

In Kirkland, the Lake Washington School District has elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, and a combination junior and senior high school under the international school program. The school district serves 76 square miles and includes all of Kirkland and Redmond, and portions of Sammamish and unincorporated King County.

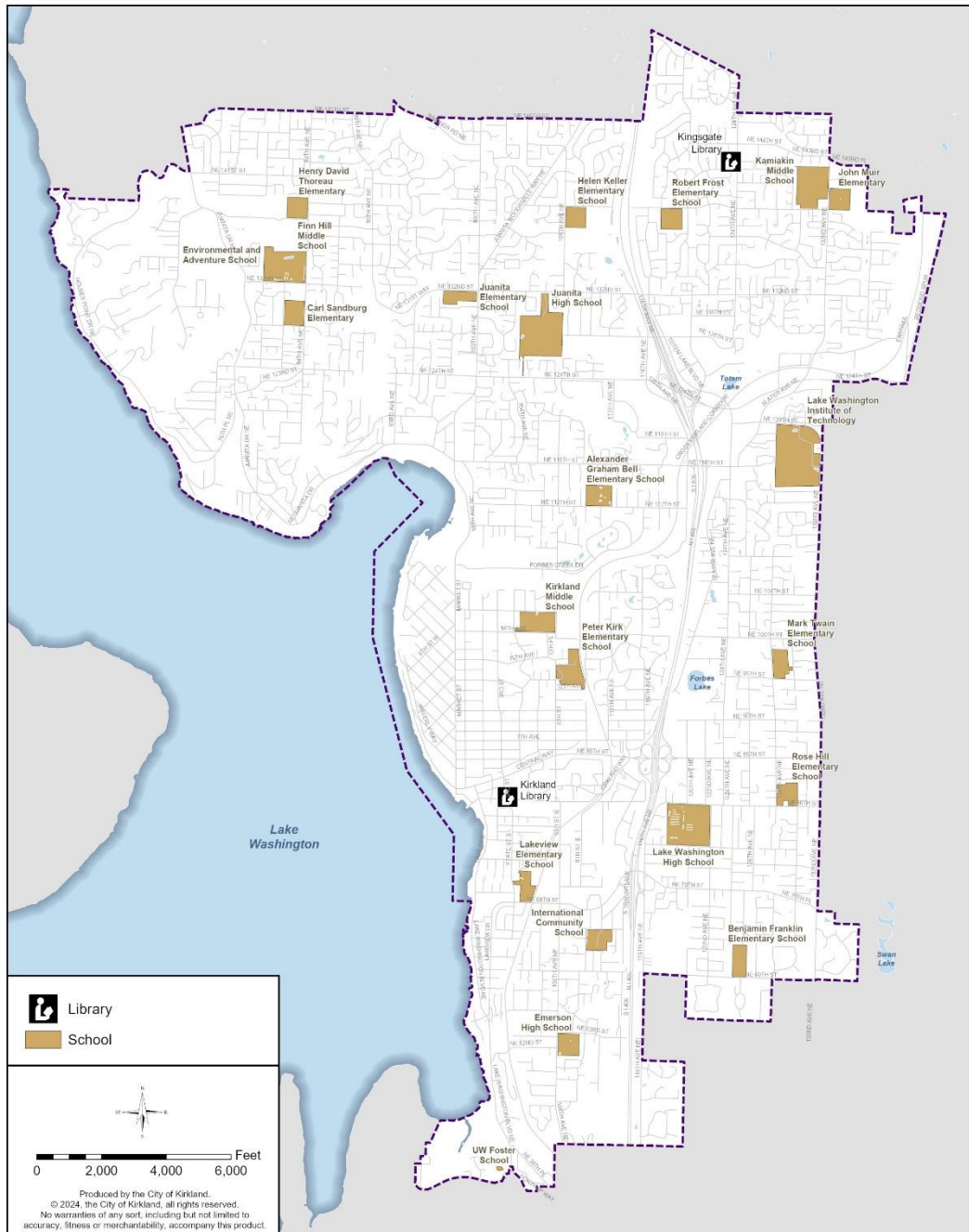
The school district's 2023-2028 Six Year Capital Facilities Plan standard of service is as follows: 20 students for grades K-1, 23 students for grades 2-3, 27 students for grades 4-5, 30 students for grades 6-8, and 32 students for grades 9-12. The school district is planning several expansions in Kirkland to meet demand and increase permanent capacity, including an addition at Lake Washington High School, Franklin Elementary School, Rose Hill Elementary School, Twain Elementary School, Finn Hill Middle School, Kirkland Middle School, and acquisition of property for future schools.

The Lake Washington Institute of Technology is located in Kirkland. LWTech is a public two-year Washington State technical community college, primarily serving the Eastside.

School locations are shown in Figure PS-2.



Finn Hill Middle School



**Figure PS-2: Public School Facilities and Libraries**



## Libraries

The King County Library System provides library services to Kirkland. The Kirkland library, located downtown, and the Kingsgate Library provide extensive reference and user services, and special collections.

The mission of the King County Library System is to provide free, open, and equal access to ideas and information to all members of the community. Library locations are shown in Figure PS-2.



The Kirkland Library

## Topic Areas

### Behavioral Health

The Regional Crisis Response (RCR) Agency is a collaborative effort among the north King County cities of Bothell, Kenmore, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline that provides regional mobile crisis response services for the five-city region. Crisis responder mental health professionals focus on compassionate and immediate crisis response, de-escalation, resource referral, and follow-up tailored to the specific needs of those experiencing behavioral health challenges. The five-city coalition that formed RCR did so in part to reduce any over-reliance on traditional public safety response to behavioral health calls by providing an alternative.



## **Goals and Policies**

**Goal PS-1: Provide fire protection, emergency medical services, emergency management, and police service to the community through a cost-effective and efficient delivery system to maintain a safe environment for the public.**

*Policy PS-1.1: Provide fire, emergency medical services and police services to the public which maintain accepted standards as anticipated growth occurs.*

Basic public safety services should keep pace with anticipated growth. Kirkland should plan for new growth to avoid deficiencies in accepted levels of service.

*Policy PS-1.2: The adopted levels of service for fire and emergency medical services are as follows:*

- *Emergency medical: total response time of six minutes to 90 percent of emergency incidents.*
- *Fire suppression: total response time of six minutes, 20 seconds to 90 percent of all fire incidents.*

Total response time is the time measured from when a 911 call is made, to when firefighters arrive at the incident location. It is the sum of dispatch time, turnout time, and travel time, where dispatch time is the time taken to receive the call at the dispatch center and process the call (goal of 60 seconds), turnout time is time from when firefighters are dispatched to the incident to begin responding (goal of 60 seconds for EMS, 80 seconds for fire), and travel time is drive time from the fire station to the incident location (goal of 4 minutes).

The emergency medical and fire suppression response times are accepted standards for two principal reasons. For fire response times, it sets a threshold to minimize property loss and reduce the level of risk to response teams. For emergency medical services, the response time has a direct link to human physiology and resuscitation.

Response times are influenced by various factors such as locations of resources, accessibility, and available personnel. Kirkland must balance all of these factors in prioritizing the commitment of resources. Fire PS-1 indicates where there are deficiencies. The City continues to study improvement opportunities that can be implemented as funding becomes available.



Kirkland Fire Fighters

*Policy PS-1.3: Provide a system of streets that facilitates improved emergency response times and active transportation connections by avoiding the creating of new dead-end streets and promoting through-street connections where feasible.*

This policy supports the development of more through-street connections allowing for multiple emergency access routes. Where feasible, dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs should be avoided. For the most part, Kirkland is served by interconnected streets but there are exceptions. Interstate 405 presents a significant barrier to east-west travel. New access routes should be explored in areas of the City that have poor emergency access and inferior emergency response times. Traffic calming programs and devices should be designed to balance the needs of the neighborhood and the need to maintain emergency response time levels of service.

*Policy PS-1.4: Explore the use of emergency service vehicles of different sizes, electric personal mobility devices, or new technology that is suited to navigate urbanized environments. Consider updates to City regulations and codes to ensure adequate and innovative emergency access.*

The City should consider the options presented in the policy to improve emergency access to parts of Kirkland that are difficult for emergency service vehicles to access, such as Goat Hill, and so that the emergency service vehicles are better equipped to navigate through urban environments.

*Policy PS-1.5: Develop and maintain a water system that provides adequate fire flow for anticipated development under the Comprehensive Plan.*

This policy is intended to ensure that an adequate water supply and pressure are available for new and existing development. The City should periodically review the system to identify existing and potential fire flow deficiencies and continue to employ a variety of methods to correct those deficiencies.

*Policy PS-1.6: Provide a personal preparedness and incident management training and exercise program for City employees.*

City employees are responsible for moving from their everyday positions into emergency response operations positions during an incident. As such, this policy states that the City shall provide employee training that builds the capability for staff to be prepared to respond to a disaster. Incident management skills are exercised at least once per year, testing the City's ability to perform response operations during a disaster.



Fire extinguisher training for City employees

*Policy PS-1.7: Maintain accessible disaster plans that incorporate a whole community approach to incident management for all hazards.*

This approach to incident management planning incorporates the whole community concept including planning for individuals, families, businesses, City of Kirkland, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, voluntary organizations, neighborhood associations,

people with access and functional needs, children, school systems, elders, and private-sector partnerships.

*Policy PS-1.8: Sustain relationships with local, state, and federal partners to facilitate enhanced public safety and disaster readiness, response, recovery, and resilience.*

This policy acknowledges that a comprehensive emergency management program engages at the regional, state, and federal level as disasters and resource management reaches beyond geographical borders. Maintaining strong relationships through planning, training, and exercise efforts with partner agencies will help the Kirkland community during a disaster.

*Policy PS-1.9: Ensure that safety and security considerations are factored into the review of development proposals.*

Kirkland has a history of thorough review of new development proposals at an early stage to ensure that fire, emergency management, police and building safety concerns are factored in.

*Policy PS-1.10: Ensure that public facilities are compatible in design with surrounding uses by reviewing new public facilities for compliance with adopted urban design principles. Foster multi-purpose public facilities.*

Facilities are spread throughout the community in residential and commercial areas. City Hall has been designed to be welcoming to the primarily residential neighborhood to the north, while providing territorial views from within, and functions as a major landmark and community gathering space at the edge of Downtown. The Justice Center, completed in 2014, reused an existing building, and incorporated many green building techniques and public art in its remodel. Other facilities, like fire stations, should be responsive to the unique design considerations of the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Public art should be incorporated to improve aesthetics, whether as an integral part of the architecture, through landscaping or by applying other techniques. When feasible, the City should design multi-purpose public facilities that provide community space.





Kirkland City Hall

*Policy PS-1.11: Update Fire, Emergency Management, and Police functional plans at appropriate intervals to incorporate and remain consistent with the goals, policies, and land use projections of the Comprehensive Plan.*

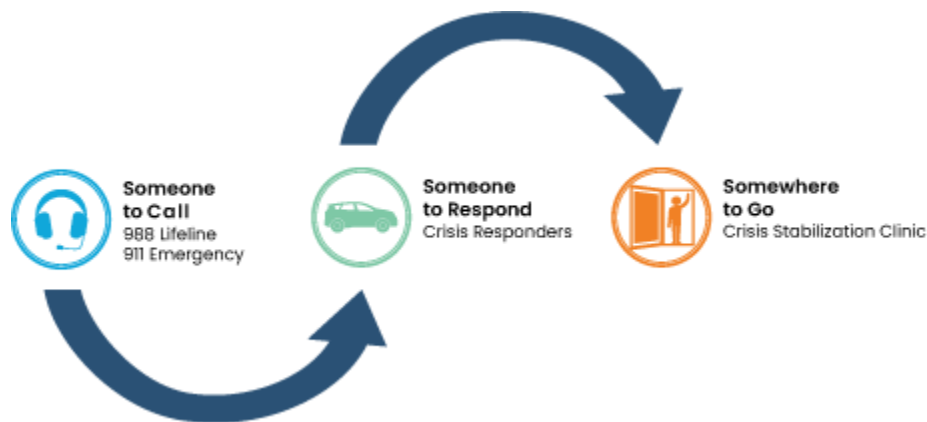
All of the City's planning documents should be based on consistent and accurate assumptions. The Comprehensive Plan should be updated as necessary to reflect any changes in those assumptions.

*Policy PS-1.12: Continue to invest in policies and services to support people experiencing behavioral health challenges.*

The City should continue its participation and contribution to the Regional Crisis Response (RCR) Agency. This inter-jurisdiction collaboration deploys highly skilled mental health professional Crisis Responders through the 911 system to people in acute behavioral health emergencies. RCR Crisis Responders provide immediate de-escalation, assess for underlying causes, and navigate and connect people to the community of care to reduce the chance of a future crisis. RCR Crisis Responders are on radio air with other first responders across Kirkland, and our North King County partner cities, and deploy with law enforcement officers and firefighters to in-progress scenes with any behavioral health component.

Having someone to respond is just one element of a complete continuum of behavioral health care for our community. A new 988 crisis line, launched in 2022, provides community members in crisis with someone to call. The last element is having somewhere to go. In 2023, Connections Health Solutions signed a lease in Kirkland to open the region's first behavioral

health crisis response center. This center will provide a walk-in mental health clinic, crisis stabilization, extended evaluation and treatment, and outpatient recovery services to anyone, regardless of income or insurance status. The City should continue to support each of the three elements of a complete continuum of care for community members experiencing behavioral health: someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go.



Creating the RCR Agency is just one element of a complete continuum of behavioral health care that our community needs.

*Policy PS-1.13: Build positive relationships between the Kirkland Police Department, Kirkland Fire Department, and community members.*

Dedicated effort is needed to maintain and improve positive relationships with community members, especially communities of color. The City should continue to explore ways in which to build positive relationships between the community and Kirkland Police.

The Police Department works with the Lake Washington School District through the Community Resource Officer (CRO) program. The CROs respond to calls for service at schools as student safety is a top priority. Other primary purposes of the partnership are to help keep students out of the criminal justice system; provide positive interactions between law enforcement officers, school staff, students, and families; and connect students, families, and school staff to supportive community services. .

*Policy PS-1.14: Support initiatives that promote housing affordability in order to provide opportunities for City employees of all incomes to have the option to live in Kirkland.*

**Goal PS-2: Maintain the quality of life in Kirkland through the planned provision of regional services in coordination with other public service providers.**

*Policy PS-2.1: Coordinate with regional service providers to maintain appropriate levels of service, review funding alternatives, and coordinate construction of shared public facilities.*

*Policy PS-2.2: Coordinate with neighboring cities, King County, the Lake Washington School District, special districts and other agencies in the planning, provision, and use of joint activities and facilities.*

The City should look for these types of opportunities in order to make efficient use of existing facilities and save on the costs of building new facilities or funding new programs. Joint use and maintenance of school athletic fields and facilities for community programs are examples.

*Policy PS-2.3: Work collaboratively with the Lake Washington School District to assess appropriate school impact fees to help offset the cost of financing new school public services infrastructure serving new development, and to ensure these fees account for future growth.*

State law permits cities to assess impact fees on new residential development for facilities provided by the Lake Washington School District. Impact fees may be collected and spent only on specific publicly owned capital facilities. These capital improvements are identified in the Lake Washington School District's Capital Facilities Plan and are designed to provide facility capacity and service to areas within the community at large. Fees should be assessed that allow the Lake Washington School District to continue to build new capital facilities that accommodate growth in an environment of escalating land costs and the need for new urban-style schools (which could be taller than single-story or two-story schools).

*Policy PS-2.4: Coordinate with the Lake Washington School District on the planning, siting, and development of new, replaced or expanded school facilities to increase public school capacity and explore opportunities to create staff housing and/or other affordable housing on school property. Coordinate with the school district on using school facilities to meet the community's recreation and other needs.*

The City and Lake Washington School District should work together on planning for school facilities consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan policies and growth forecasts. This could mean using consistent data on population and demographics based on the City's growth and development projections. The City and School District should confer on the siting and development of school facilities needed to serve existing and projected residential development, as well as the City's development regulations and impacts to other public services and facilities. The City and School District should explore opportunities for jointly developing and maintaining school sites to maximize community use. The City should explore zoning code amendments that remove barriers to projects that would increase school capacity and provide incentives for new development to provide school space. The School District should provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to connect schools to the surrounding neighborhood when new or expanded schools are proposed. The City should continue to implement the Safer Routes to School Action Plans. With the development of new or expanded schools, the School District should ensure appropriate public involvement.

*Policy PS-2.5: Locate new or expanded schools, institutions, and other community facilities and services in areas that are served by quality transit service and active transportation networks.*

*Policy PS-2.6: Commit resources to public services and infrastructure for underserved populations.*

*Policy PS-2.7: Ensure all public services and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.*

The City created an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan and Pathway to Transition Plan in 2018, which summarizes the status of the City's facilities and programs for ADA compliance, lists areas needing correction, and lists costs and methods to make public facilities accessible. Both plans are living documents, which will be updated as programs or projects are completed.



Kirkland City Hall, Lower entrance

*Policy PS-2.8: Coordinate with utilities and local fire departments to lessen the risk and impact of wildfires.*

The City should work with utilities such as PSE and neighboring fire departments. PSE's wildfire mitigation efforts include electric system upgrades, year-round vegetation management, and operational procedures during wildfire season.

*Policy PS-2.9: Implement strategies to obtain a reasonable and fair allocation of King County tax dollars collected from properties in Kirkland (examples include Best Starts for Kids and Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy) to complement King County programs in Kirkland and fill gaps in local services. These services could include supporting affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, crisis response, human services grants, outreach to community members experiencing homelessness, and other similar services.*



The City should take steps to collaborate regionally and with King County to ensure that Kirkland receives a fair allocation of tax revenue collected from properties in Kirkland to advance King County levy objectives and fill related gaps in local services. The City provides some similar services but has identified needs for additional local services that the community funds through voter-approved County ballot measures. This action would bolster both the County programs and services provided to the Kirkland community.