Juanita Neighborhood Plan Community Survey Summary

From October through December of 2023, the City of Kirkland conducted an online community survey to inform the update of the Neighborhood Plans for the Juanita neighborhood. This is a summary of the results and key themes from the Juanita neighborhood community survey.

The goal of the survey was to gather information to help determine if the future visions for the neighborhood reflect the desired future growth of the area, and to identify key challenges or improvements to be considered during the plan update process. The results will help revise the vision statements and policies for the neighborhood plans.

The Survey Monkey survey was open for 71 days and consisted of 17 community questions as well as 6 optional demographic questions. Participants were asked to identify what about their neighborhood is valuable to them, what they would like to see changed, evaluate values, prioritize potential solutions for climate issues, and gauge key topics of interest.

Promotion of the survey consisted of mailing postcards with the survey link and QR Code to 4375 residents and property owners within the Juanita neighborhood. Staff used the postcard as a form of targeted outreach by sending the postcard to all multifamily properties (i.e., all condos, apartments, townhomes, etc. with at least 4 units) within the Juanita neighborhood boundaries. Targeting the residents in these areas of the neighborhood aligned with an overarching goal set within the Juanita Neighborhood Plan Community Engagement & Public Outreach Plan[1] of increasing awareness and participation in the Plan update from traditionally underrepresented parts of our population such as renters and households that may be lower income. A link to the survey was included on the project webpage and advertised consistently in Citywide bulletins. The survey link was included in a list serv announcement to 291 email addresses, the Juanita Neighborhood Association posted an announcement about the survey, and local businesses were encouraged to participate via in-person visits and flyers.

## Quick Facts and Demographics of Who Participated

Participants were prompted to identify their relationship to the neighborhood, such as if they are a resident, employee, business owner, student, or visitor of Juanita (Question 1). The results are as follows:

- *Resident*: 292
- *Visitor*: 55
- *Employed in Juanita*: 25
- *Own a business in Juanita*: 12
- *Student in Juanita*: 9
- *Attend worship service in Juanita*: 16

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[1]Complete Community Engagement & Public Outreach Plan is available at
https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/3/planning-amp-building/neighborhood-plan-updates/juanita-kingsgate-2023-neighborhood-plan-framework_final_wattachments_09072023.pdf

Race, ethnicity, length of time in neighborhood

- Question 2 – Length of time living in neighborhood:
    - *20+ years*:   34.48% (110 responses)
    - *11-19 years*:   16.93% (54 responses)
    - *6-10 years*:   17.55% (56 responses)
    - *1-5 years*:   21.63% (69 responses)
    - *<12 months*:   1.88% (6 responses)
    - *Not a resident*:   7.52% (24 responses)

- Question 3 – For residents: Where did you live before residing in Juanita?
    - This question was answered by 260 respondents and skipped by 73 respondents
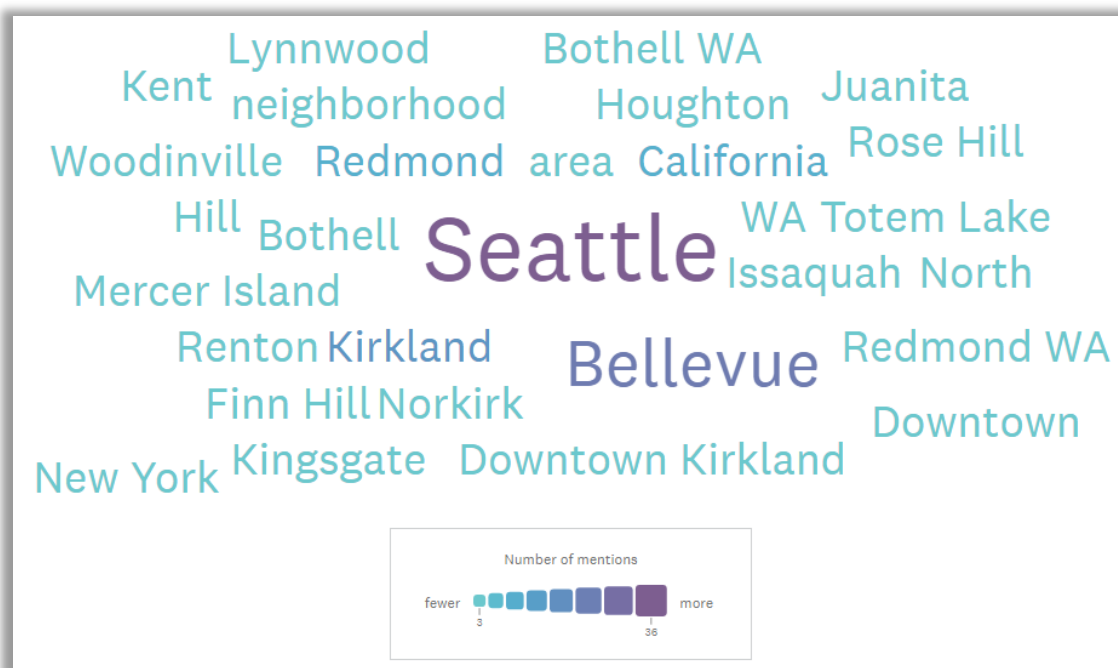
- Question 18 – Gender identity:
    - *Girl/Woman (cisgender or transgender)*:   60.84%
    - *Boy/Man (cisgender or transgender)*:   25.24%
    - *Non-binary or 'Something else fits better*:   1.29%
    - *Prefer not to answer*:   9.39%

- Question 19 – Age:
    - *Prefer not to answer*: 7.44% (23 responses)
    - *Under 18*:   0.65% (2 responses)
    - *18-24*:   0.97% (3 responses)
    - *25-34*:   11.00% (34 responses)
    - *35-44*:   21.63% (66 responses)
    - *45-54*:   18.45% (57 responses)

- 55-64:   19.42% (60 responses)
- 65+:   20.71% (64 responses)

- Question 20 – What is your ethnicity?
    - *Hispanic/Latinx*:   2.6% (8 responses)
    - *Not Hispanic/Latinx*:   77.7% (240 responses)
    - *Prefer not to answer*:   19.7% (61 responses)

- Question 21 – Do you consider yourself... (select all that apply)?
    - *American Indian or Alaskan Native*:   1.9% (6 responses)
    - *Asian*:   10.0% (31 responses)
    - *Black/African American*:   1.0% (3 responses)
    - *Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander*:   0.0%
    - *White*:   68.9% (213 responses)
    - *Prefer not to answer*:   18.4% (57 responses)
    - *Other:*   4.7% (14 responses)

Staff Comments:

*Esri 2020 population, income, and demographic data estimates that the population in Juanita neighborhood was 12,588 people with the majority of people 66.5% identified as white alone. The median age in this area is 35.6, compared to U.S. median age of 38.6. The techniques used by staff and Working Group members to promote the survey are likely responsible for the **333 total responses**. At the same time, a greater diversity of participants within the race, ethnicity and age categories was hoped for. The older age of participants and a greater percentage of woman-identifying participants are consistent with what we typically see involved in neighborhood plan updates. The survey is just one tool that is being used to gather public opinion and staff will continue to promote a diversity of participation in the process.

Survey Questions and Key Themes

(Q4) **What are three places, things, or features about Juanita that you enjoy most?**
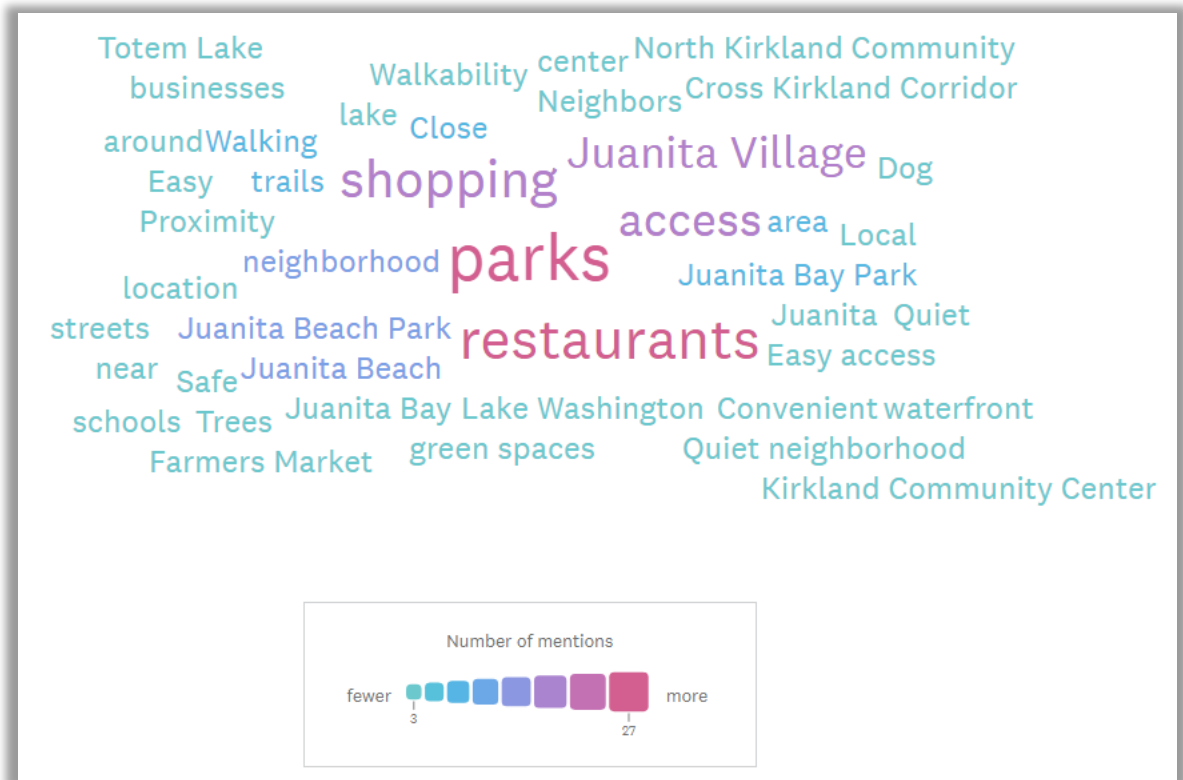
Respondents identified a wide variety of factors that make Juanita an enjoyable place to live. Key themes received from comments:

- Centrally located and provides convenient access to other parts of Kirkland
- Environmental features – greenspace, parks, trees, wildlife, creeks, trails and views; all of which connect the community to the natural environment
- Proximity and access to Lake Washington shoreline – Juanita Beach Park, Juanita Bay Park
  - Abundance of waterfront recreation
- Pedestrian and bike infrastructure
- Sense of community that is fostered through neighbors, schools, and community centers

(Q5) What are three places, things or features you would like to see changed or improved on to make the neighborhood even better?

Key themes received from comments:

- More options for year-round activities; an additional indoor community center or play space
- More traffic calming measures (speed bumps, roundabouts, etc.) throughout the neighborhood as well as better traffic management near NE Juanita Drive and 98th Ave NE intersection
  - speed controls needed near NE Juanita Drive
- Better restaurant and retail options in the neighborhood commercial centers of North and South Juanita; aesthetic improvements and needed in North Juanita commercial center area
- Improved public transit options that are within walking distance; direct bus routes to other cities like Bellevue and Seattle

- Better continuity between north and south Juanita; there is a need for consistent neighborhood planning between these areas
- More parking options for waterfront parks and beaches
- Keep the low density areas of the neighborhood as single-family; increase density "where it makes sense"
- Redevelop the existing Goodwill site (at 100th Ave NE and NE 132nd St intersection) and the existing Michaels site (at NE 116th St and 98th Ave NE intersection)
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to highly trafficked areas in the neighborhood and sites for future development (example: Goodwill site at 100th Ave NE and NE 132nd St) pedestrian access paths to North Kirkland Community Center and waterfront parks, improve sidewalk conditions and connectivity (fill in missing sidewalks) especially along school walking routes; crosswalk safety near Juanita High School and NE 132nd St intersection.

Staff Comments:

Respondents in general express struggles moving through the neighborhood efficiently and safely. As repeated throughout the survey, it is clear there are advocates for increased pedestrian and bike infrastructure within the neighborhood to reduce dependance on vehicular travel. There are several ongoing programs that support improving non-motorized transportation network throughout the city: The Kirkland Transportation Plan (formerly known as the Transportation Master Plan) is currently being updated. The Safer Routes to School program seeks projects to improve pedestrian access around schools. The Neighborhood Safety Program allocates funds annually for neighborhood capital improvement projects. As we move forward in this process, staff will consider how these concerns can be addressed.

Based on responses, public amenities and access to the environment are important to the Juanita community.

(Q6) **Please rank how effective the current Juanita neighborhood is in carrying out the following neighborhood principles:**

Top three principles identified as performing excellently:

1. *Natural Environment*: The neighborhood consists of a sustainable and resilient natural environment for all people and creatures, including future generations.
2. *Safety*: I feel free from the risk of danger and risk of loss, in my home, and while traveling around the neighborhood knowing I have City police, fire and emergency services available.
3. *Community*: There are safe, welcoming gathering places that accommodate all users and visitors.

Top three principles identified as preforming poorly:

1. *Affordability for all*: People who wish to live here can find affordable, suitable housing in the neighborhood, regardless of income, age, race, or other factors

2. *Walkability/Bikeability*: Alternatives to driving like walking and bicycling are safe and easy to use in my neighborhood, and connect me to destinations such as schools, shopping, employment, and faith-based places.
3. *Connectedness*: I can conveniently get to where I need to go by whatever mode works best: walking, biking, taking transit, or driving.

Staff comments:

Based on the top choices, Juanita community members recognize that a major asset of the neighborhood is the natural environment of which it occupies. The neighborhood is safe and respondents feel generally free from risk, loss, and danger, and also feel that Juanita provides gathering spaces and public space for the community to interact with one another.

Juanita's challenges or improvement areas identified by survey participants include housing affordability for others (not necessarily themselves), getting around the neighborhood conveniently and struggling to reach their destinations, as well as adequate pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility.

(Q7) How often do you use the following methods to learn what is going on in Juanita? (rank never, rarely, sometimes, often, daily)

Most frequently used methods:

1. Local social media groups (unaffiliated Facebook pages, Nextdoor, Twitter (X))
2. Word of mouth through established relationships
3. City of Kirkland announcements and/or webpages

Least frequently used methods:

1. My neighborhood association
2. Local news (television, news articles, etc.)

Staff comments:

Results lead staff to believe the most frequently used methods include the methods that relay information the most frequently. Neighborhood associations and local news might give periodic updates but aren't relied upon by the community to give real-time news and announcements. This supports other evidence that social media and social interaction is the best way to understand happenings at a local level.

(Q8) Where would you like to see more housing supply in Juanita? (select all that apply)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Nowhere	35.03%	110
▼ Near existing bus stops and/or routes	31.85%	100
▼ In areas that already have townhomes and/or apartments	27.71%	87
▼ Near places where people work	24.52%	77
▼ Near businesses where people shop or receive services	24.20%	76
▼ Near busier and higher-capacity roads (neighborhood example: Juanita Drive and Juanita-Woodinville Way NE)	16.24%	51
▼ Everywhere (in other words, every part of Juanita could have a little more housing)	13.69%	43
▼ Away from busier and higher-capacity roads	13.69%	43
▼ Near schools	12.10%	38
▼ In areas that have mostly single-family homes today	10.19%	32
▼ Near parks and trails	9.55%	30
Total Respondents: 314		

Key themes from write-in comments:

- **Current street network and other infrastructure is already overloaded**; stop building until the capacity is available
    - "Don't just build housing: build the transportation infrastructure to support it! Good sidewalks, protected bike lanes, dedicated bus lanes, etc."
- More housing on the Goodwill lot
- Juanita has a strong mix of all housing already and density should not be increased
- Additional opportunities for housing should be explored as close to the freeway as possible
- Increased housing density should be focused on the upper floors of new urban villages; more mixed use with grocery options
- More transit-oriented development
- Juanita is full already
- Affordable housing is very hard to find in the neighborhood

(Q9) **How would you rate the affordability of housing in the neighborhood?**
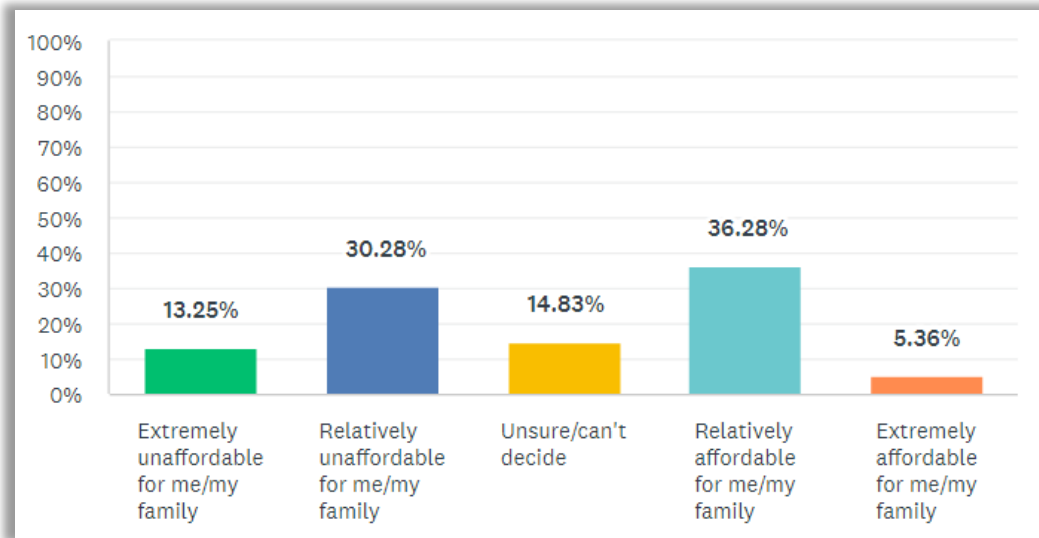
Staff comments:

With just over 40% of respondents indicating that the neighborhood housing options are (extremely or relatively) affordable, it is clear that housing costs are affecting the residents of Juanita. This aligns with regional and national trends, and highlights the need for more affordable living options in order to ensure that those who wish to live here also have the option to do so.

(Q10) **Which modes of transportation do you primarily use to access Juanita? (select all that apply)**
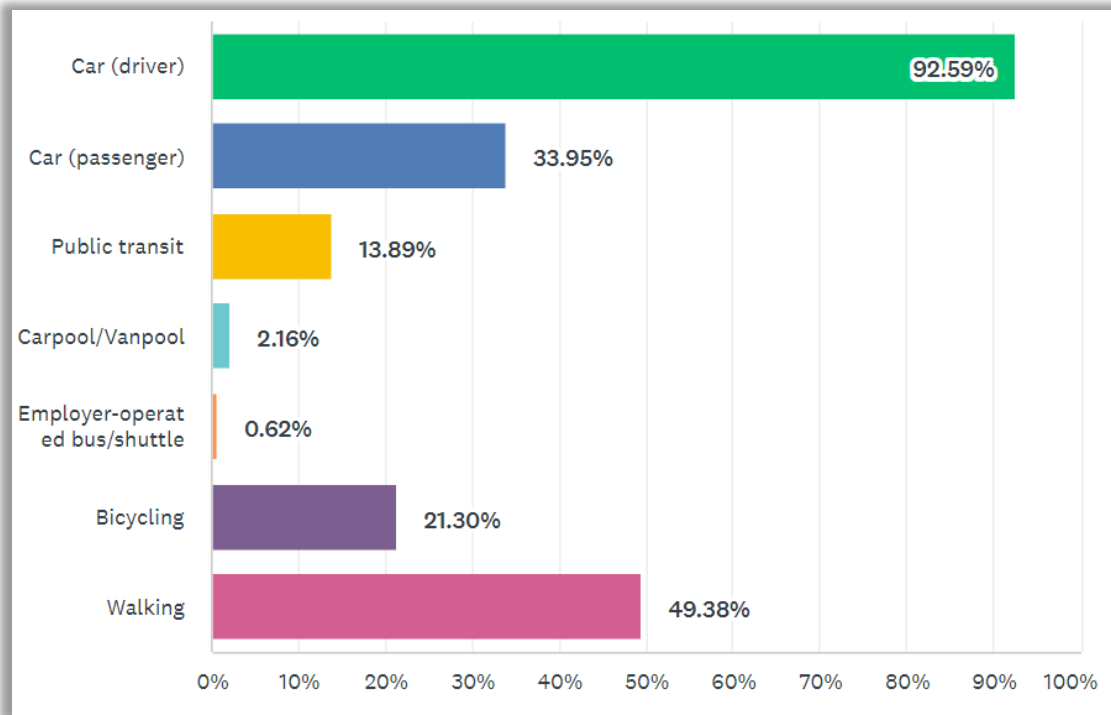
Staff comments:

Respondents report using cars most frequently to move through and within the neighborhood. While walking was indicated as another popular method of travel, deficiencies of the existing pedestrian pathway network have been indicated. Greater emphasis should be put on improving the diversity of travel methods as a means to reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety conditions, as well as to meet the accelerated reduction targets of greenhouse gas emissions that are required by state law: 50% reduction by 2030, 75% reduction by 2040, and a 95% reduction by 2050.

(Q11) **How often do you leave the neighborhood for the following reasons?**

Top three most popular reasons for leaving daily:

1. Work
2. School (or school drop off/pick-up)
3. Recreational activities

Top three most popular reasons for leaving often (multiple times a week):

1. Recreational activities
2. Grocery shopping
3. Other retail shopping

Staff comments:

These responses help staff understand the current needs of the neighborhood and assists in the analysis of how Juanita can implement the 10-minute Neighborhood concept. 10-minute Neighborhoods are walkable communities with two vital characteristics: destinations and accessibility. Basic needs are satisfied within a 10-minute walk, and the community can conveniently get to those destinations. Results indicate that Juanita community members could do with more grocery, retail, and recreation options closer to them.

(Q12) What are the top three environmental issues you believe to be most pressing in the Juanita neighborhood?

Top three most pressing environmental issues:

1. *Retention of greenspaces and parks*:   75.56% (238 responses)
2. *Wildlife preservation*:   39.68% (125 responses)
3. *Water quality and conservation:*   *39.37%* (124 responses)

Other issues identified:

1. Sustainable transportation options
2. Climate change adaptability and mitigation
3. Waste reduction and recycling

Key themes from write-in responses:

- Allow for at least a little bit of mixed use zoning for corner stores; with these, car trips to larger grocery stores such as Fred Meyer can reduce traffic, improve overall community health, and improve community engagement.
- Tree removal for large projects is a major issue in Juanita; retaining the tree canopy
- Traffic and road congestion; speed safety
- Light pollution

(Q13) Please rate how effective you think the following actions might be for protecting the natural environment, providing quality of life, and enhancing greenspaces in Juanita: (rank most to least effective)

Ranking based on 320 responses:

1. *Pedestrian-Friendly Design*: Prioritize walkability with wide sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian plazas to make high-density areas more accessible and enjoyable for pedestrians.
2. *Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)*: Concentrate higher-density housing and mixed-use developments around public transit hubs, reducing the need for cars and encouraging the use of public transportation.
3. *Adaptive Reuse*: Encourage the repurposing of existing buildings for housing and mixed-use developments, preserving historic structures and reducing demolition waste.
4. *Public Space Activation*: Design public spaces that encourage social interaction, cultural activities, and community gatherings to enhance the quality of life in high-density areas.

5. *Energy-Efficient Transportation*: Invest in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and promote the adoption of electric vehicles to reduce emissions from transportation.
6. *Bike-Friendly Infrastructure*: Create bike lanes, bike-sharing programs, and secure bike storage facilities to encourage cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation.

Staff comments:

Top choices of pedestrian-friendly design and transit-oriented development showcase the desire from the community to draw activity and development toward the established high-density areas in order to preserve greenspaces in other parts of the neighborhood, to reduce the need for vehicular trips, and to make local businesses more accessible.

(Q14) How important is it to you that the Juanita neighborhood attracts new businesses and commercial investments?
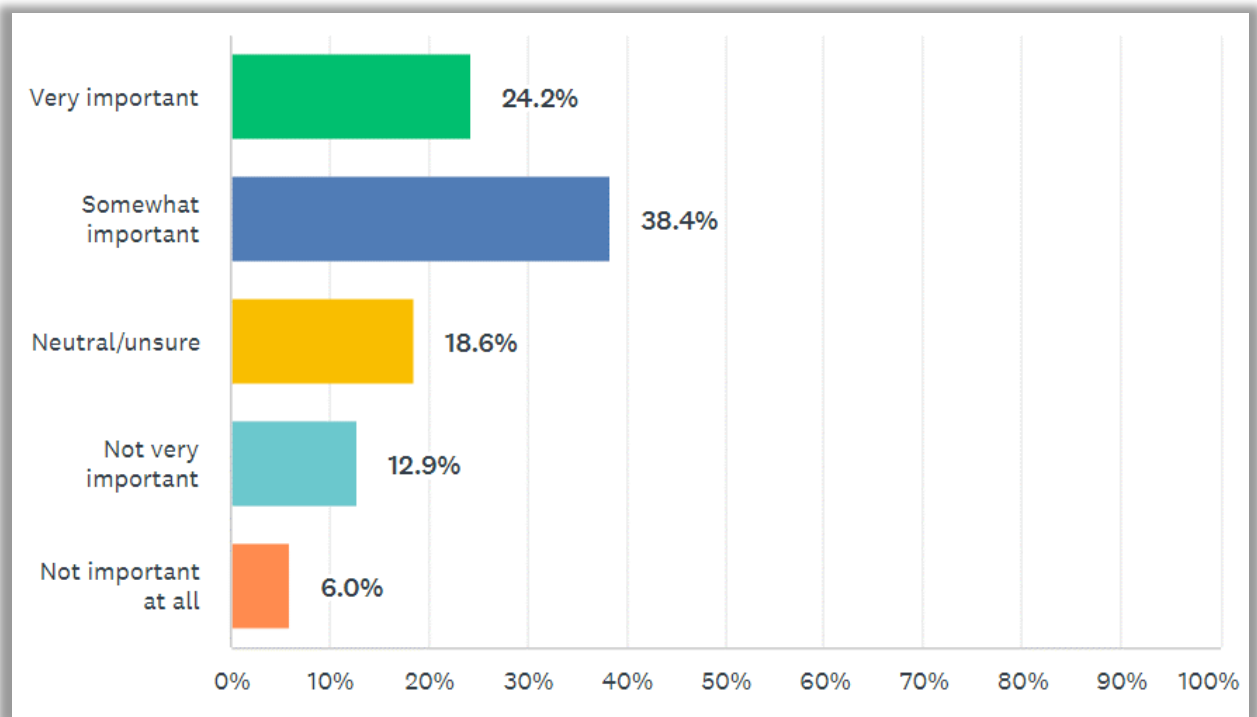
Staff comments:

These are common themes throughout this survey and the November 30th Visioning Workshop comments for enhancing both neighborhood commercial centers by encouraging more restaurants, retail, pubs and cafes. Special attention should be given to the North Juanita neighborhood commercial center and the existing strip malls abutting 100th Ave NE have been suggested as potential locations for increased commercial and retail opportunities.

(Q15) What specific types of business or industries do you believe should be encouraged in Juanita?

Top three industries that should be encouraged in Juanita:

1. *Food and retail*: 79.05% (249 responses)
2. *Arts and culture*: 49.21% (155 responses)
3. *Green/sustainable businesses*: 33.33% (105 responses)

Key themes from write-in comments:

- Specific suggestions: grocery stores, home-office related businesses, auto mechanics, salons, hardware stores, recreational businesses, produce stands
- Focus economic development in other areas of Kirkland like Downtown and Totem Lake
- We have enough businesses here
- Smaller, local retail with unique goods should be prioritized over big box stores and big corporations

(Q16) **What are some ways that we could connect with our neighbors to discuss these topics and find out what is important to them? (these can be locations, events, etc.)**

Key themes received from comments:

- A stronger social media presence
- Work with the schools to involve youth and parents in the discussion
- Flyers at local businesses and park bulletins
- Utilize the North Kirkland Community Center for announcements and events
- Workshops, town halls, tabling events
- Online surveys, visual polls, and other similar online tools
- Booths at local events (Juanita Farmer's Market)

(Q17) **If you have other thoughts about your neighborhood or the plan, please add them here.**

Staff comments:

Of the 333 respondents, only 112 participants provided feedback to this question

Key themes received from comments:

- Green space and tree canopy have been severely impacted by all the new development; we must protect existing trees rather than allow developers to replant
- Stop pushing growth and development in this neighborhood
- Owner-occupied living is preferred by existing residents over rentals; build condos for purchase to give people pride and hope of owning
- Recreation improvements:
    - More options for cultural events, concerts, and adult recreation opportunities
    - More outdoor and indoor sports courts; pickleball and basketball specifically mentioned

- Safety and speeding measures around the neighborhood are needed after recent influx of pedestrian accidents; traffic calming designs engineered into the street infrastructure to limit drivers ability to speed near parks, children and seniors
- Preserve the single family, low density nature of most of Juanita
- There are too many missing connections in the cycling, walkability and public transit infrastructure to make them widely usable

Next steps

The Planning and Building Department will continue to work with the Juanita neighborhood to address these concerns and consider these issues for policy changes to the neighborhood plan. This survey is just one of the several public outreach tools being used to gather public input for the Neighborhood Plan. The survey results will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council.

For more information regarding the Neighborhood Plan update process please visit the project webpage at kirklandwa.gov/JuanitaPlanUpdate or contact LeAndra Baker-Lewis, Senior Planner, Kirkland Planning and Building Department, llewis@kirklandwa.gov, 425-587-3265.

*Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute) is a geographic information demographic data and mapping company