

Juanita Neighborhood Plan Update Workshop Comments

On November 30, 2023, the City of Kirkland conducted an in-person Juanita Neighborhood Plan update Workshop for participants to identify their future vision, key issues, concerns, challenges, for the future of the neighborhood. Approximately 30 people attended. Comments from the workshop together with responses from an online survey will be used to develop a new vision statement and revise policies in the existing Juanita Neighborhood plan due to be completed by the end of 2024.

Planning and Building Department staff gave a presentation describing the planning context in Washington State, the components of the Kirkland Comprehensive Plan, that Neighborhood Plans must be consistent with the citywide Comprehensive Plan policies, and the process for updating the neighborhood plan.

Participants were divided into 3 breakout tables where they were asked 3 questions and comments were recorded. After the roundtable sessions, participants returned as a large group and scribes reported out the key comments heard from each table. A large group visioning exercise was then conducted that allowed participants to use a hypothetical news article set in 2044 to describe their views and ideas for how the neighborhood will excel twenty years from now.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a visioning exercise group news article was created, next steps were described, and attendees were encouraged to participate in the survey and to stay involved in the process.

Below is a summary of the visioning exercises, questions, and responses received at the workshop.

Large Group Visioning Exercise

The visioning adlib exercise allowed workshop attendees to look ahead in a creative way by creating their own customized news article for a hypothetical front-page story: Juanita voted Best Neighborhood in Kirkland 2044!

“Imagine all the work that has been done by the City and community for the last 20 years has paid off tremendously, and a regional newspaper is featuring Juanita as the #1 Best Neighborhood in the city! We’re on the front page. In a huge front-page headline, there we are. So... what does the article say?”

“What does the neighborhood have? What does it look like? How do people move through it and within it?”

Using their imaginations and visions for their ideal neighborhood, participants expressed different characteristics and elements of a great neighborhood. Here were some ways people described the 2044 version of Juanita:

"Juanita is...."

Responses included: accessible, mixed-use, diverse, active, scenic

"The commercial center areas are...."

Responses included: vibrant, connected, walkable, unique, convenient

"Housing types are...."

Responses included: diverse, affordable, family-friendly, accommodating of seniors

"Housing supply is...."

Responses included: abundant, growing, healthy,

"People move through the neighborhood...."

Responses included: using many modes, safely, conveniently, easily,

"The street network is...."

Responses included: planned, dynamic, free-flowing, not car-centric

"There are safe pedestrian connections between...."

Responses included: north and south Juanita, schools and homes, residential and commercial uses

"The natural environment is...."

Responses included: protected, unique, supported, lush

"Amenities likes parks and greenspace are...."

Responses included: first-rate, maintained, established and preserved

"For a healthy ecosystem, the neighborhood prioritizes...."

Responses included: streams, greenspace, trees, natural areas

"Community gathering places include...."

Responses included: the waterfront, parks and beaches, the North Juanita commercial center, pools, community plazas

"Irreplaceable neighborhood assets include...."

Responses included: wildlife, grocery stores, waterfront and parks, natural spaces

"Juanita enriches my life be bringing a sense of...."

Responses included: connection, belonging, wonder, security

Roundtable Questions and Responses

1. Neighborhood Highlights & Uniqueness

Question: Name 1 thing that describes what makes your neighborhood great or unique from other neighborhoods in the city?

- **Environmental features**; sunsets, views, waterfront, wildlife scene, geology of the area, homes with lawns
- **Public transit options are better than other parts of Kirkland**
- **Quality of schools and presence of youth**
- **Community features**; diverse, quiet, environmentally aware, inviting, “small community feel”
- **Historic structures**; protecting these are a priority
- **Abundance of parks and public amenities**
- **Proximity to freeways**
- **East/west walkability**
- **Places that make Juanita unique**; Goat Hill, Spuds restaurant, McAuliffe Park, Forbes Creek stairs, Forbes House, Josten Park, Edith Moulton, North Kirkland Community Center
- **Fun, unique retail**; plenty of hidden gems

2. Neighborhood Challenges & Solutions

Question: Given the survey results thus far, some of the neighborhood’s top identified challenges are lack of economic development in North Juanita, deficiency of public amenities and community programs, the need for better alternatives to driving (walkability, more transit, bike infrastructure), the need for traffic and safety improvements, and lack of connectivity between residential and commercial uses. Name and describe a possible solution for 1 of these challenges? What are additional challenges we can study?

- **Concern about the environmental challenges in South Juanita**; Michael’s is sinking into the ground.
- **Juanita Creek restoration and protection**; balance between making the creek accessible but protecting the area from litter and misuse
- **Goodwill site**; desires to see a playground, a park, housing, satellite police station, and retail
- ****Reduce cut through traffic** from Market ST to NE 132nd ST by rerouting traffic to I-405 where possible
- **Tree retention should be a higher priority** for developers and development
- **Retention of businesses that the community needs**; Juanita does not have a hardware store, Juanita Village could use a grocery store, etc.
 - o Concentrate employment opportunities, use the existing centers and allow them to grow. Keep them located there
- ****Improve public transit options equitably within the entire neighborhood**
- ****Intersection traffic and pedestrian improvements needed at intersection of 98th Ave and NE Juanita Drive**
- ****Pedestrian connections to and between amenities**; the Juanita public pathway would connect 2 existing dog parks
- ***More parks** in North Juanita

- **More opportunities for development** by the Safeway in North Juanita commercial center
- **Affordability of homes;** there are not many developable sites in Kirkland, especially for affordable housing but there is a need for the future generation to be able to live in the area
- ****More bike and pedestrian improvements** to lessen the traffic congestion
 - o **Underground pathway to connect Juanita Village to the waterfront**
 - o Have a multi-modal pathway that allows access to North Juanita commercial center so you don't have to use 100th St
 - o Michael's site is lacking bike infrastructure
 - o 98th Ave bike improvements needed; there is a gap in bike lanes. The route is currently very dangerous but connects the neighborhood to the waterfront & businesses
 - o Pedestrian improvements, especially at NE 132nd ST
 - o Connect Forbes Creek Drive to Cross Kirkland Corridor

3. Neighborhood Opportunities

Question: Name 2 opportunities in your neighborhood for creative changes you would like to see for the future?

- ****Juanita Public Pathway;** from Cross Kirkland Corridor at I-405 to Heronfield Wetlands, to Juanita High School, Windsor vista, brickyard row/road park and ride to Burke Gilman trail
- ****Transit hubs at key neighborhood locations;** Safeway, Michaels, Juanita Bay Park, Fred Meyer
 - o Something similar to downtown transit center that has an abundance of bike lockers and bike parking
- ***Adult playground** at Juanita Bay Park with workout machines
- **Community central zones** home to meeting spaces, a library, public performance area, live music; a dynamic space that can accommodate many different uses in one area
- ***North Kirkland Community Center & Park redevelopment**
- **Public private partnerships for affordable housing;** accessibility for low-income, ADA accessible living opportunities
- **Universal design standards for construction**
- ****Bike connection** from NE Juanita Drive to Safeway
- ***Skate park at Juanita Beach**
- **Daylighting of Juanita creek;** restoration of critical areas surrounding Juanita creek and an increase in access, pedestrian bridges and paths
 - o **Protect view corridors** to lake around Juanita Bay park; connect parks to each other
- ****Pedestrian crossing of I-405** at 140th ST to Kingsgate Park
- ***Pocket parks;** potential locations include north Juanita, Goodwill site and under transmission lines
- **Satellite police station near fire station at NE 132nd ST**
- ****Multi-modal connection to the Finn Hill trail**
- ****Sidewalk improvements** are needed at NE 145th ST north boundary; highly used corridor.
- ****Bike infrastructure improvements on NE 120th PL.**

- ****Roundabouts;** possible locations include NE 132nd ST at Goodwill site and NE 124th Ave
- **Formally connect Juanita Beach park to Juanita Bay park**
- **Invest in the waterfront;** buy the properties along the waterfront for public use

Notes:

* These comments will be forwarded to the City of Kirkland Parks and Recreation Department for consideration

** These comments will be forwarded to the City of Kirkland Transportation (multi-modal programs), Capital Improvement Program Division, and Neighborhood Safety program for consideration with the citywide Kirkland Transportation Plan that is currently being updated.