

Kingsgate Neighborhood Plan Update Workshop Comments

On November 29, 2023, the City of Kirkland conducted an in-person Kingsgate Neighborhood Plan update Workshop for participants to identify their future vision, key issues, concerns, challenges, for the future of the neighborhood. Approximately 33 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 Kingsgate 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: Kingsgate 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 Kingsgate 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 Kingsgate:

"Kingsgate is...."

Responses included: diverse, tranquil, connected, safe, affordable, inviting

"The commercial center area is...."

Responses included: vibrant, ADA accessible, walkable, modern, cultural

"Housing types are...."

Responses included: historic, varied (single family and multi-family), attractive

"Housing supply is...."

Responses included: sufficient, healthy, affordable, evenly distributed, oriented around transit, age-friendly

"People move through the neighborhood...."

Responses included: with plenty of accessibility options, safely, easily, quickly

"The street network is...."

Responses included: complete, integrated, thoughtful, transit-oriented

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

Responses included: anywhere and everywhere, home and schools, shopping and work, Kingsgate and other neighborhoods

"The natural environment is...."

Responses included: peaceful, lush, healthy, cherished, accessible

"Amenities like parks and greenspace are...."

Responses included: established, prioritized, made abundant, well-maintained, used

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

Responses included: native plants, trees, public transit, the environment

"Community gathering places include...."

Responses included: dog parks, bookstores, the library, taverns and restaurants

"Irreplaceable neighborhood assets include...."

Responses included: HOA pools and amenities, local business, schools, and parks

"Kingsgate enriches my life by bringing a sense of...."

Responses included: community, calming, belonging, peace, home

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?

- **Location** – close to Woodinville wineries, Village at Totem Lake, and nearby medical facilities
- **Community** – friendly neighbors, close knit feel; participants enjoy running into neighbors on walks; good sense of community and neighbor comradery
- **Walkability** (commercial close to home) so many things are close
- **Feels like the “quieter side of Kirkland”**; there is an old-time charm that is appreciated
- **Bikeability** - Totem Lake connector bridge access, Cross Kirkland Corridor, and other dedicated bike/ped infrastructure
- **Density restrictions**; low-density is preferred, it’s nice that less development happens in Kingsgate than other areas of the city. No high-rise buildings
- **School system** – high quality, walkable schools with routes for children
- **High percentage of dog-ownership**
- **View of the mountains**
- **Neighborhood pools**; Home-owners association pools act as a community binding agent and are used by many
- **Neighborhood gathering places** – Ice skating rink, the Kingsgate Library, Friends of Youth facility, 132nd Square Park
- **Safety** - General feeling that we are safe from danger
- **Greenbelts/forest along slopes**
- **Active Neighborhood Associations**, HOAs, and subdivisions

2. Neighborhood Challenges & Solutions

Question: Given the survey results thus far, some of the neighborhood’s top identified challenges are lack of economic development, deficiency of public greenspace, 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?

- **Promote collaboration** between commercial parcel owners within the Kingsgate commercial center to **encourage a planned, collective development** that benefits all parties and the community
- **Reduce surface parking** that currently exists in the commercial center
- **Assess existing zoning requirements** for opportunities to promote the 10-minute neighborhood concept
- **Provide rent subsidies or other affordability measures for commercial property owners**; the development of the shopping center should not come at the cost of existing local business
- **Establish beautification regulations for development within the commercial center** that call for pedestrian access paths, vegetation, and lighting for safety

- ****More public transit options;** a better synergy should exist between King County Metro and the City to revitalize the bus route options for Kingsgate
- Work with local HOA's to **allow public access to private HOA amenities**
- ****Bring MetroFlex, Circuit, and other eco-friendly rideshare features to Kingsgate** for easy access to Totem Lake and Downtown
- **Electrify public spaces** with electric vehicle and electric bike charging stations
- ****Enhance bike infrastructure** on all roads with traffic traveling above 20mph to promote a safe riding experience
- **Incentivize community gardens** and pea-patches through a rebate or similar programming
- **Concerns about capacity for sewer and water.** How is the water and sewer capacity for new growth? Is there proper infrastructure to accommodate new growth?

3. Neighborhood Opportunities

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

- ****Improved bike infrastructure** throughout the neighborhood
- ****Roadway improvements** such as roundabouts to improve safety and traffic conditions
- ****Mobility & connectivity** between the Kingsgate library and the Kingsgate commercial center
- ****Sidewalks that are ADA accessible** and wide enough for increased use
- ****New multi-modal connections** into and within the neighborhood
- ****Improve crossing at 124th Ave NE and NE 144th ST;** concerns raised about the ingress/egress safety near the carwashes
- ****I-405 pedestrian bridge** at NE 140th ST
- **Stormwater detention system;** established through public and private partnerships
- *Improve playfield conditions
- *More community facilities and neighborhood parks
- *Connect the Cross Kirkland Corridor to the East rail trail
- **Housing above Kingsgate commercial center;** mixed use development

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.