



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Planning and Building Department
123 5th Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Allison Zike, AICP, Deputy Planning & Building Director
Janice Swenson, Senior Planner
Scott Guter, AICP, Senior Planner

Date: April 18, 2023

Subject: Juanita High School Special Presentations on Affordable Housing Policy for Kirkland's 2044 Comprehensive Plan Update

Recommendation

Receive presentations from students of two civics classes from Juanita High School on their affordable housing policy recommendations.

Background

As part of the Kirkland 2044 Comprehensive Plan (K2044) Update, City staff is working with the Lake Washington School District (LWSD) to create curricula that will engage high school students in discussions relevant to the Comprehensive Plan update. The ongoing work with LWSD is a result of a concerted effort by staff to create opportunities hear directly from youth about the future of our City, as they are one of the priority populations identified in the [Community Engagement Plan](#) for the project. In March 2023, City staff provided an overview of the K2044 Update process to two civic classes at Juanita High School, along with details on their selected topic, affordable housing.

Students have since conducted further research on housing and affordable housing to identify potential solutions and conducted engagement within the school community to understand their housing needs. The Juanita High School students will present their findings to the Planning Commission at their April 27, 2023 meeting. See Attachment 1 for a summary of the class project.

Attachment

1. Juanita High School Project Summary

Leia Deak
Juanita High School
10601 NE 132nd St.
Kirkland, WA 98034
April 18, 2023

Planning Commission
123 5th Ave
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Planning Commission:

On April 27th senior students from Juanita High School will be presenting to you their ideas and proposals on the topic of affordable housing in Kirkland. In late January Janice Swensen reached out to me with an opportunity for my Civics students to work on a project as part of the city's community engagement efforts. My primary goal as a Civics teacher is to educate and empower students so that when they leave my classroom, they will have the tools and confidence to actively participate in their community. Naturally, I jumped at the opportunity to partner with the city and, with my students, embarked on what we have called the "City Project".

In late February I introduced the project to my 2 classes of Civics students. Initially they were given three topics to choose from:

1. Transportation and Sustainability: How do we (City of Kirkland) move Kirkland community members towards sustainable forms of transportation?
2. Housing Choices: How can we (City of Kirkland) increase the availability of affordable housing in Kirkland?
3. Kirkland Identity: Who are we as a community and how can we advance the City's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging roadmap initiatives?

Students overwhelmingly voted to take on the issue of affordable housing. They expressed a belief that affordable housing is the most urgent issue in their community as well as a core issue that encompasses other community issues, including transportation and identity.

Students have spent the last 8 weeks researching the broader issue of affordable housing, learning about what the city is currently doing to make housing more affordable, and gathering information about how the cost of housing is impacting people in Kirkland. They conducted a community survey and collected Kirkland housing stories through individual interviews. In March Janice Swenson and Scott Guter joined our

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classroom and presented to the class details about the city's plans and graciously answered questions from the students.

The City Project culminates in the presentations you will hear at the April 27th Planning Commission Meeting. I have asked students to present to you their conclusion, in which they will answer the question "How can we, the City of Kirkland, increase the availability of affordable housing?", and a plan of action in which they will outline the steps they believe the city should take. Each class will be represented by one of their peers and many of the students will be in attendance as observers.

I thank you in advance for allowing students the opportunity to participate in your session. I believe that this will be a memorable learning experience for them and one they will take with them long after they graduate.

Sincerely,

Leia Deak, Social Studies Teacher
Juanita High School
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