

# NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street Station Area Plan

Report on the Public Open House held January 7, 2021

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## Executive Summary

As part of the DSEIS comment period for the NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street Station Area Plan which spans January 5<sup>th</sup> through February 5<sup>th</sup>, the City of Kirkland held a live, online public open house on January 7, 2021, to introduce the concepts and alternatives studied to improve understanding of the choices being considered. Participation in the zoom meeting was robust, estimated at about 140 participants compared to the previous workshop which had about 80 participants, and typical City in-person open house of about 30-45 participants. Presentation included an overview of the DSEIS process and commenting, a summary of the three Alternatives studied, their alignment with project objectives and evaluation, and next steps toward a Preferred Alternative which will likely be a combination of features from multiple alternatives. Small group discussion followed the presentation. Common themes and priorities from these discussions included desire for open space, bike, and pedestrian connections; strong support for better transit and mobility connections with the new BRT and potential Houghton P&R connections; importance of more affordable housing opportunities; desire to focus density around transit and concerns about transitions between higher density areas and adjacent neighborhoods; questions around the balance of jobs/housing as well as balance of new development and required infrastructure and services; and concerns and questions about traffic impacts. After group discussion, Q&A lasted for about 15 minutes, which primarily revolved around questions related to process and participation. The meeting ended with a summary on how and where to comment, ask questions, how to participate in the survey, and a reminder to submit comments by February 5<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. by postal or electronic mail.

## Meeting Purpose

The City of Kirkland held a live, online public open house to introduce the community to the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street Station Area Plan. The comment period of the DSEIS opened on January 5<sup>th</sup> and will close on February 5<sup>th</sup> to provide an opportunity for all interested parties to submit comments on three draft alternatives for the plan. Given the technical nature of the DSEIS document, the City held a meeting early in the comment period to introduce the concepts and alternatives studied to improve understanding of the choices being considered. A recording of the open house and the presentation slide deck will be available on the City's website for people who were unable to attend. This allows anyone interested in the plan access to this information and benefit from the summary and explanatory information.

## Participation

There was robust participation in the meeting, estimated at about 140 participants. Outreach to notify the community about the engagement period and the public meeting began in December 2020. The meeting was conducted over zoom, and there were 122 zoom accounts that participated in the meeting.<sup>1</sup> However the number of participants was higher, as several accounts included multiple participants.



## Meeting Agenda

The meeting began with a presentation by City staff and the project team. Adam Weinstein, Director of Planning, gave an overview of the project and its purpose. Becca Book of Mithun introduced participants to meeting protocols, including tips on effectively using the zoom platform and meeting ground rules and the overall planning process. Lisa Grueter of BERK Consulting explained the overall process for the DSEIS and how to submit comments. Brad Barnett of Mithun summarized the three alternatives that were studied, highlighting areas of similarity and contrast. Erin Ishizaki of Mithun presented an evaluation of the alternatives and their consistency with overall project and community goals.

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants joined small group discussions for about 30-40 minutes in virtual breakout rooms. Facilitators, which included City staff and consultant team members, supported these discussions and took live notes using the Miro platform. The Miro platform was set up to provide visuals and other support materials, as would be available to participants in a traditional open-house setting. Facilitators took notes on participant comments using virtual “sticky-notes.” A sample tableau of the materials available in each virtual breakout room is shown in the following image:

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<sup>1</sup> City of Kirkland representatives and members of the consulting team were not included in this number.

Discussion Group Questions

1. Introduce yourself, what makes your community special? What would you like to preserve for future generations?

2. How do you envision this neighborhood in 20 years? Which elements of the alternatives shared today align with this vision?

3. Which elements from the alternatives measures best achieve the project goal of creating an equitable, livable, and sustainable Kirkland? Which do not?

4. Out of these Future Community Characteristics, which are your top 3?

5. Which, if any, of the mitigation measures described would you like to see incorporated in the preferred alternative?

SIGN IN SHEET:

1. Allison Zike, City of Kirkland  
2. Genic  
3. Cory  
4. Mark  
5. Ryan  
6. Jann  
7. Michelle  
8. Scott

Misc. Questions/Comments  
Allison, 16 hours ago

Community Characteristics:  
1. Creating and preserving public open space  
2. Ease and safety of travel by walking, biking, and transit  
3. Ease of travel in private vehicles  
4. Limited building heights and densities  
5. More affordable housing  
6. More jobs in Kirkland  
7. More green buildings and features  
8. Preservation of neighborhood character  
9. Support for local businesses, existing and new  
10. The ability for people from all walks of life to live in Kirkland

Example Mitigation Measures

Element	Proposed Measure Highlights
Housing/Land Use / Aesthetics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require more affordable housing units beyond 10% existing inclusionary housing regulations</li> <li>Provide new incentives to developers to develop more affordable housing</li> <li>Allow developers to pay an in-lieu fee if fewer affordable units are constructed than planned</li> <li>Participate in regional efforts to leverage funding</li> <li>Design standards for compatible development and transitions to existing neighborhoods</li> <li>Focus on higher buildings near the interchange, with lower height buildings to transition into the surrounding neighborhoods</li> </ol>
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create vegetated buffers between heavily trafficked areas and residential development to help improve air quality, preserve or restore natural resources</li> <li>Offer incentives or requirements for green building to improve air quality and stormwater</li> </ol>
Transportation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add capital improvements to roads to accommodate cars (e.g. add travel lanes, turn lanes, signals)</li> <li>Improve transit and pedestrian networks</li> <li>Incentivize transit and ride sharing</li> <li>Alter parking standards such as altered parking ratios, managed on-street parking</li> <li>Change the end use mix to better use existing and planned infrastructure</li> <li>Alter policies to balance available infrastructure capacity, funding, and availability of other modes of travel.</li> </ol>

Alternative Summary

Alternative 1: No Action  
Reflects existing zoning and current plans. It makes no planning changes to accommodate projected growth.

Alternative 2: Guiding Transit Oriented Growth  
Allows moderate growth around transit, primarily focused on existing commercial areas such as Rose Hill.

Alternative 3: Transit Oriented Hub  
Allows most growth to support transit-oriented development, primarily focused on existing commercial areas such as Rose Hill.

Development Typologies

Development Typology Map

Maximum Allowable Building Heights

Mobility

After participants introduced themselves in their small groups, facilitators led discussion of five questions:

- What makes your community special? What would you like to preserve for future generations?
- How do you envision this neighborhood in 20 years? Which elements of the alternatives shared today align with this vision?
- Which elements from the alternatives measures best achieve the project goal of creating an equitable, livable, and sustainable Kirkland? Which do not?
- Out of the Future Community Characteristics, which are your top 3?
- Which, if any, of the mitigation measures described would you like to see incorporated in the preferred alternative?

At the conclusion of the discussion groups, participants were asked to submit their three top ideas for the NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street Station Area plan. This generated the following word cloud on the following page.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Although instructed to provide three single-word answers (or to hyphenate a phrase to create a compound word such as "Alternative-3," some participants submitted a string of text, resulting in high amount of visual static in the word cloud.



- Lower growth seems appropriate for the west side of the interchange and higher growth seems appropriate for the east side of the interchange.
- Desire to balance growth with mobility, infrastructure and service needs. Moderate growth is a compromise.
- Form of growth and density should provide quality of life with open spaces and views.
- Strong desire to keep housing away from I-405 due to noise and air quality.

## **Land Use and Zoning**

- It's worthwhile to plan for better utilization of this area.
- New development is concentrated in the west, but few improvements are identified for the east.
- Center density around the transportation hub. Good TOD development will reduce traffic impacts.
- What makes this area a destination? Ensure it is a destination for the region.
- Support single-family neighborhoods.
- Create child-friendly neighborhoods where housing has play areas and parks that are easy to walk to.
- Ensure views are preserved.
- High rises support more population vertically and prevent sprawl.
- Integrate density with transit opportunities to get rid of auto-dependence.
- Add mixed use to existing commercial areas.
- Use townhouses to achieve medium densities.
- Could the light industrial areas near the Cross-Kirkland-Corridor be changed to residential?
- Ensure that there are amenities and parks to make densities and smaller living spaces livable – integrate green spaces with new development.
- Form based zoning is a good approach.
- Require sustainable development, LEED.
- This area needs to be optimized for people.
- Do not place housing near the highway.
- Zone to leverage investment in transit.
- Ensure the integration of public art.
- Create a unified design theme and public gateways.
- Focus on infill housing instead of large complexes.

## **Housing**

- Importance of preserving affordability in the community- both market rate and subsidized.

- Increase the diversity of housing in this area: missing middle, mixed use, etc.
- What are the effects of bringing low income housing into this area on existing homes?
- Will new housing displace existing residents by raising taxes?
- 10% provision does not create enough affordable housing. Hold developers to more.
- Housing needs daycares and other amenities like play areas, open spaces, and access to parks.

### **Transportation and Parking**

- Traffic is already a concern in the 85<sup>th</sup> street corridor and adding new growth will make it worse.
- Consider diverting traffic to 87<sup>th</sup> and put the crossing with 114<sup>th</sup> there.
- Making biking feasible. Is there adequate ROW space to support safe biking? Particularly in neighborhoods?
- Making walking feasible. Add greenspaces for safety and widen sidewalks. More midblock pedestrian connections.
- Connect to the Cross Kirkland Corridor.
- Google expansion will affect residential streets.
- Green street should be at: 120<sup>th</sup>, near the high school, near the women and children's center
- More people and less parking will not work in this area.
- How will construction impacts to 85<sup>th</sup> be mitigated during development?
- Address the dead end streets near Costco.
- Connect Houghton P&R to this area via bus connections and walking / biking trails.
- Is 80<sup>th</sup> street wide enough?
- Need to move people up/down hill on 85<sup>th</sup> to connect downtown to the station.
- Buses get stuck in traffic too – need dedicated transit lanes.
- BRT is not as impactful on transportation habits as light rail.
- Address pass through and cut through traffic.

### **Environment and Open Space**

- Preserving wetlands and the ecosystem is a priority.
- More open spaces are needed in these alternatives – and more access to nature.
- Restore native plants to this area.
- Address the increase in noise.
- Preserve and add tree canopy.
- Address climate change.
- Desire for open space, bike, and pedestrian connections

- Ensure that there are amenities and parks to make densities and smaller living spaces livable – integrate green spaces with new development.
- Create child-friendly neighborhoods where housing has play areas and parks that are easy to walk to.

### **Economic Development and Employment**

- A full range of employment is needed. Are the jobs anticipated to be service jobs? Office jobs?
- Does this area need 30,000 jobs?
- It's important to plan for new jobs from Google and other major employers in this area.
- Is the jobs-housing balance right? Are there enough jobs to support the proposed housing?
- Reduce commercial development in this area in favor of greening the area.
- Costco doesn't fit with the plans for this area.

### **Neighborhoods**

- Highland neighborhood should not be connected to 405 in the future.
- Neighborhoods should not be pressured to change.

### **Services and Infrastructure**

- How will needed capital investments be supported?
- What are impacts on schools?
- What will be the impact on crime?

### **Overall process concerns and questions**

- The process should include significant outreach efforts and follow the established outreach plan.
- Questions regarding what outreach was conducted especially postcards and mailers
- Project team should update public on progress toward outreach plan
- Questions about when public can comment and how that relates to decision making
- New website is not user friendly and previous plans and EIS documents need to be added back.
- Better coordination with Sound Transit.