

2024

# YEAR 4 REPORT CARD



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#### Left (from top to bottom):

Completed Totem Lake Park mural project, Governor Inslee and Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold at Energy Smart Eastside Heat Pump Installation, Identifying cedar leaves.

#### Above (from top to bottom): .

Filling Station at David Brink Park, City staff at Sustainability Showcase held during City Hall for All event.

## YEAR 4 (2024) OVERVIEW

The Sustainability Strategic Plan (SSP, formerly known as the Sustainability Master Plan) was adopted in December 2020, making 2024 the fourth year of implementation progress for reporting. Many of the post-pandemic protocols in place during 2024 were conducive to virtual, in-person meetings and hybrid meetings and events, and the City government used expanded means of public outreach to significantly advance SSP implementation.

The SSP has 196 actions organized into eight focus areas. These actions range from low to high levels of effort and cost to implement. The SSP is a living plan that can change over time, but was designed with an approximately 10-year timeframe in mind. Staff is keeping track of elements of the plan that would be appropriate to change in the future, as much has been learned about how to more effectively achieve the goals of the SSP. Any future amendments will make this sustainability plan more relevant over the coming years. It is expected that there will be changes to the SSP that acknowledge changes in legislation, new technology, new countywide planning policies, and process improvements.

In addition to guarterly reports of progress on the SSP, this fourth report card shows what City Council, City staff, and the larger community are working on to create collective impact and make Kirkland an even more sustainable, equitable and inclusive community. In 2025 staff will work with subject matter experts to integrate more actions of the SSP into work plans, and build sustainability and equity-driven decisionmaking into City processes so that sustainability continues to evolve into an enduring organizational trait.

#### 2024 Actions

23 distinct actions were worked on in 2024:

- Actions ES-1.4 and ES-2.1
- Action BI-3.5
- · Actions LT-1.1, LT-2.1 and LT-2.4
- Actions EV-2.3, EV-7.4, EV-10.2, EV-10.3 and EV-10.9
- Actions SM-1.1, SM-1.3, SM-2.1 and SM-2.2
- · Actions SG-1.7 and SG-5.4
- Actions SB-2.1 and ES-4.2
- Actions HC-1.1, HC-12.1, HC-13.1 and HC-13.3

### 2024 in numbers



696 total solar arrays are generating power in Kirkland, which is a 20% increase over 2023



5 Yard Smart Rain Rewards projects were installed at Kirkland residences managing over 91,739 gallons of rainwater



44 households received 157 tree rebates for trees planted on private property that will help manage over 116,905 gallons of stormwater



More than 820 trees were planted in Kirkland parks and natural areas, including 50 trees in active use areas



Collected over 9,000 pounds of batteries at City facilities and at events throughout the year

## YEAR 4 (2024) PROGRESS

The chart below indicates action status by focus area. In progress actions indicate one-time actions that staff have started to work on. Ongoing actions indicate recurring and regularly occurring activities that have begun. Ongoing activities encompass multiple services and projects, and are likely to remain ongoing for the entire time period, while actions in progress have a defined completion point. This progress chart reports completion status of all actions since 2020.

<b>派</b>	Energy Supply and Emissions (20 actions)
	■ 2 Actions Completed ■ 6 Actions Ongoing □ 12 Actions Not Started
	Buildings and Infrastructure (13 actions)  ■■■□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
	3 Actions Completed
	Land Use and Transportation (21 actions)
	■ 3 Actions Completed □ 17 Actions Ongoing □ 1 Actions Not Started
	Natural Environment and Ecosystems (37 actions)
	8 Actions Completed 25 Actions Ongoing 4 Actions Not Started
	Sustainable Material Management (17 actions)
	■ 3 Actions Completed ■ 11 Actions Ongoing & In Progress □ 3 Actions Not Started
	3 Actions completed 11 Actions ongoing a in Arogress 2 Actions Not Started
	Sustainable Governance (35 actions)
	■ 6 Actions Completed ■ 19 Actions Ongoing & In Progress □ 10 Actions Not Started
\$	Sustainable Business (13 actions)
	■ 3 Actions Completed ■ 6 Actions Ongoing □ 4 Actions Not Started
	Healthy Community (40 actions)
	■ 5 Actions Completed ■ 16 Actions Ongoing & In Progress □ 19 Actions Not Started



### ENERGY SUPPLY + EMISSIONS

# Community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Goal ES-1: Prioritize Community GHG emission reduction to achieve City Comprehensive Plan and K4C goals.

Action ES-1.4: Update Kirkland Comprehensive Plan climate goals regularly to be consistent with updated State and regional goals.

In 2022, new GHG emission reduction goals were adopted as part of the King County County-Wide Planning Polices to align with Washington State's new regulations. This was taken into consideration during Kirkland's Comprehensive Plan update which was adopted in December 2024. The new County GHG emission goals now include a target reduction for 2040, which will be helpful as an incremental target for the City to track progress ahead of the ultimate 2050 goal. These goals are consistent with work that the City has been doing in collaboration with King County and K4C cities and are as follows:

2030: Reduce emissions by 50%

**2040:** Reduce emissions by 75%

**2050:** Reduce emissions by 95% and achieve the remaining 5% through carbon sequestration.

The new County goals are included in the Sustainability, Climate and Environment (SCE) Element of the 2044 Comprehensive Plan. There are a significant amount of SCE goals and policies that have been adopted that will help the City mitigate, adapt and become more climate resilient to the impacts of climate change such as heat and smoke events. However, it will be important to align and create complementary actions to protect the community in the Sustainability Strategic Plan, Transportation Strategic Plan, Housing Strategy Plan and Urban Forestry Strategic Management Plan and other relevant functional plans.

### **Purchased Electricity**

Goal ES-2: Ensure that purchased energy is 100% carbon-free by 2030

Action ES-2.1: Establish a plan to have 100% renewable energy for the community by working with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and other stakeholders.

Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) helps us achieve this action through a closely watched process and annual reporting by all Washington State utilities about how they are achieving this plan. The CETA requires the following of our utilities:

- **2025** Coal fired electricity is eliminated
- 2030 All electricity sales must be carbon neutral, meaning that remaining emissions must be offset with clean energy initiatives such as community solar or other projects
- **2045** All electricity sold in WA State must be derived from renewable or non-emitting sources

PSE has reported its fuel mix for electricity to the Department of Commerce with the following percentages for their electricity sales over the last three years:

**2021:** 36.31% renewable verified and 63.69% fossil derived and not verified as renewable.

**2022:** 43.06% renewable verified and 56.94% fossil derived and not verified as renewable.

**2023:** 51.18% renewable verified and 48.82% fossil derived and not verified as renewable.

What's next? Make progress on GHG emission reductions by enhancing programs like Energy Smart Eastside to increase energy efficiency and reduce other forms of energy that contribute to emissions that are not covered in Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act.



### **BUILDINGS + INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Existing Buildings**

**Goal BI-3:** Reduce energy use in existing buildings by 25%, by 2030 and 45% by 2050.

**Action BI-3.5:** Work with K4C, energy efficiency contractors and interested parties to help homeowners select cost-effective home energy efficiency improvements

#### Status:

The Energy Smart Eastside (ESE) program has made many advancements since it first began in mid-July 2022. The City of Kirkland is a partner with other ESE cities and has invested in this program which was able to achieve a return of approximately \$4 for each dollar invested, and resulted in many low-income and moderate income heat pump installations. In 2024, 56 low-income Kirkland households were able to get a heat pump at no cost. In addition, Kirkland's grant funding has helped 14 moderate-income households obtain a heat pump by providing a rebate that varied from \$3000-\$6000 and that helped fill the gap when Puget Sound Energy incentives were reduced in 2024. A moderate-income incentive is essential because the average cost of heat pump is \$20K-\$25K as compared to a gas furnace which averages from \$8K-\$12K.

According to Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), electric heat pumps are over four times more efficient in providing heating compared to a gas furnace. RMI also has calculated that there is a 97% emission reduction by converting from a gas furnace to a heat pump over the lifetime of the appliance.

The equitable impact of helping families obtain clean, energy efficient heating and cooling cannot be understated. Heat pumps improve indoor air quality while reducing heating costs for the user which reduces the burden of energy poverty.

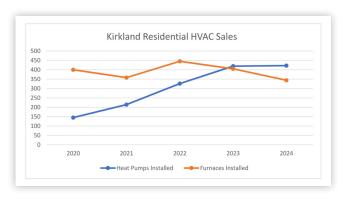
Energy poverty is a term used to describe the cost burden on low-income households of rising energy

#### **QUICK PROGRAM FACTS:**

- In 2024, 13% of Kirkland residents who implemented a heat pump used an ESE incentive
- 178 Kirkland residents have attended a workshop, webinar or booked a 1:1 energy advisor appointment

costs and illustrates that, for lower-income households, a greater portion of income is being spent on heating and cooling of structures leaving less income for food and other basic needs.

The ESE program's goal is to transform the market, so that 99% of permitted residential mechanical systems are either heat pumps or hybrid heat pumps by 2032. When this goal is achieved, nearly all existing heating systems will be replaced by a heat pump as they fail or age out. The graph below shows Kirkland's residential HVAC permits issued for new heat pumps rose from 51% in 2023 to 55% in 2024.



#### What's next?

The target for 2025 to stay on track with 2050 climate emission reduction goals is to increase heat pump adoption from 55% to 65% of new installations. The ESE approach will be to continue to offer incentives, including a new \$1,000 manufacturer instant rebate (previously \$500), pursue additional grant funding, furthering partnership with PSE, and provide educational workshops to make the transition to a heat pump even more seamless.

### LAND USE + TRANSPORTATION



### **Smart Compact Growth**

Goal LT-1: Employ Smart Growth principles in all City planning practices

Action LT-1.1: Engage in a Smart Growth policy and Smart Growth Zoning Code scrub.

#### Status:

The 2044 Comprehensive Plan (adopted December 2024) includes many policies that support Smart Growth principles, including 10-minute neighborhoods and transit-oriented development.

Future planning tasks to amend the City's Zoning Code will seek to implement the policies in the 2044 Comprehensive Plan, including Smart Growth policies focused on encouraging the most growth in existing Urban Growth Centers and Neighborhood Centers.

Action LT-2.1: Align new pedestrian connections with the 10-Minute Neighborhood concept.

#### **Status:**

The Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP) prioritization process (and the Active Transportation Plan process) establishes access to transit and activity centers as a primary criterion for new transportation projects, aligning with the 10-minute neighborhood concept.

## YOU BELONG HERE Safe - Connected - Multimodal Kirkland 2044 Transportation Plan Update

The City engaged the Kirkland community with the 2044 Comprehensive Plan update including the City's Transportation

Action LT-2.4: Strategically adopt Zoning Code amendments that foster infill projects that meet local needs.

#### Status:

The 2044 Comprehensive Plan (adopted December 2024) adopted policies that focus on fostering and enabling infill development - specifically through near-term projects focused on Middle Housing, Urban Growth Centers and Neighborhood Centers. In 2025, Council will consider Zoning Code amendments to implement State legislation related to Middle Housing, and there is a task on the 2024-2026 Planning Work Program to further optimize Middle Housing throughout the City (exact timing and scope is to be determined).

#### What's next?

Several high scoring projects were identified for the Capital Facilities Plan that are mostly complete streets projects or intersection/ crossing improvements. Additionally, the TSP includes several new programs such as a sidewalk infill program, the neighborhood greenways program, crosswalk upgrade program and several others with a focus on safety and accessibility. Staff will work closely with Council on the specifics of implementing these programs.



### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT + ECOSYSTEMS

### **Trees**

**Goal EV-2:** Protect and enhance Kirkland's watersheds and aquatic habitat conditions.

**Action EV-2.3:** Actively involve the community in the protection of Kirkland's aquatic resources.

#### Status:

The City successfully ran the annual Clean Water Pledge campaign with 193 pledges, including 31 pledges in languages other than English! We also continue to lead active community events including our Wetland Wander fields trips for grown ups, Rainworks reveal events, and storm drain marking volunteer opportunities.

**Goal EV-7:** Aspire to eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides on City owned properties.

**Action EV-7.4:** Regularly evaluate alternative products instead of synthetic pesticides.

#### **Status:**

Staff completes pest management trainings annually, as part of their applicator certifications, which include updates of all integrated pest management best management practices.

Additionally, synthetic pesticides are not applied in active use areas in parks between May and September.



Kirkland's greenspace



A pair of large Douglas Firs retained near newly constructed homes.



 ${\it Mayor Kelli Curtis and community members planting trees on Arbor Day.}$ 

**Goal EV-10:** Examine trends in canopy gains or loss, identify priorities for meeting the goal of citywide 40% overall tree canopy cover.

**Action EV-10.2:** Support internal cross department planning to develop and implement sustainable urban forestry strategies.

#### Status:

Cross-department planning occurs through the Tree Team quarterly meetings and monthly updates. Updates to the six year Urban Forestry Strategic Management Plan will be assessed in 2025, with a primary objective of increasing canopy coverage.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT + ECOSYSTEMS CONT.



**Action EV-10.3:** Pursue opportunities to improve the public tree maintenance program.

#### Status:

The public tree inventory was completed in 2024, and is in the process of integration with the Map Tree Layer ArcGIS maps and Lucity asset management software. Work plans will be developed to better enable proactive tree management.

Action EV-10.9: Create a comprehensive inventory of trees in City-owned spaces and develop a City-wide tree planting program with target areas and goals for canopy expansion in public spaces and residential areas.

#### Status:

The 2024 public tree inventory is being integrated into the City's ArcGIS data to ease integration with our asset management software and allow for continuous updates. The 2024 inventory has provided data that will be incorporated into the six year Urban Forestry Strategic Management Plan to focus new tree planting into areas of low canopy cover.



Mayor Kelli Curtis addressing community members including staff Anna Heckman on Arbor Day.



Street trees along Park Lane - The 2024 tree inventory updated information about our public trees.

#### What's next?

In 2025, City staff will develop a work plan for the year while preparing for the next Urban Forest Management Plan update. Actions will focus on management planning using the knowledge gained from the recently completed Public Tree Inventory the Canopy Cover Assessment and the incorporation of trees into the Lucity Asset Management System.



## SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

### **Waste Reduction**

Sustainable materials management is a comprehensive approach that focuses on using and reusing materials efficiently throughout their life cycles. In Kirkland, the solid waste team embraces the waste hierarchy framework in their program planning. This framework prioritizes waste management practices aimed at minimizing environmental impact, visualized as an inverted pyramid with the most preferred options at the top. The City of Kirkland has set several ambitious goals for sustainable materials management:

- •Reduce Waste: Aim for each resident to dispose of less than 5.1 pounds of trash weekly, achieving a 40% reduction. As of November 2024, Kirkland residents disposed of an average of 7.7 pounds of garbage per week.
- •Increase Recycling and Composting Diversion Rate: Target recycling or composting 70% of Kirkland's waste. The combined residential diversion rate (multifamily and single family) as of November 2024 was 54%.
- •Reduce Single-Use Items: Focus on reducing single-use food service ware.
- •Boost Composting Efforts: Promote participation in composting by encouraging businesses and residents to divert food scraps from landfills into composting or food donation programs.

#### 2024 Waste Reduction Achievements

#### Eastside Bring Your Own Cup (BYOC) Initiative

In 2021, the Cities of Bellevue, Bothell, Kirkland, and Redmond launched the Eastside Bring Your Own Cup (BYOC) program to reduce single-use cups by advocating for the use of reusable cups at coffee shops. Through collaborations with local coffee shops and marketing campaigns, these cities encourage community members to adopt sustainable habits and replace single-use items with reusable alternatives. The latest phase of the program began in 2024, building on the initial outreach efforts of 2023. The second phase achieved over 4 million impressions across the four participating cities through a digital social marketing campaign. Throughout the 2024 campaign, over 300 individuals pledged to reuse, with 39 coffee shop partners participating across the cities, resulting in an estimated 20,000 single-use cups being diverted from landfills during the 16-week program.

#### **Community Engagement and Events**

• Outreach Initiatives: Solid Waste and Stormwater teams engaged with over 2,000 community members at eight events, discussing topics like water quality, natural yard care, creek protection, recycling, and reuse pledges.



Halloween costume swap event at City Hall.

### SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT- CONT.



- Annual Costume Swap: Kirkland hosted this event at City Hall, with 200 participants exchanging costumes. The event was supported by four volunteers and was a great success.
- Recycling Collection Events: The Solid Waste team organized four events aimed at diverting electronics, textiles, scrap metals, shredded paper, tires, and more from landfills. Over 2,000 carloads were collected, significantly reducing landfill waste.
- Community Mural Project: In collaboration with Urban Artworks and the Kirkland Arts Commission, Council, staff and over 60 volunteers installed a waste reduction-themed mural at Totem Lake Park on a community paint day.
- Drinking Fountain Installations: The City installed three new drinking fountains and water bottle filling stations around the City to promote reuse.



Engaged youth and community members creating a mural at Totem Lake Park.









Reuse and Repair events held during 2024.

- Repair Events: The City partnered with King County to host a repair event at the Kirkland Library and another event at the City Hall for All event in September. Community members brought small electronics to be repaired and clothes for mending.
- · Commercial Organics and Business Engagement: Utilizing a Department of Ecology grant, the team hired consultants to assess the City's Commercial Organics Subsidized Program and identified businesses needing to divert food waste to comply with the Organics Management Law (OML). In 2024, over 40 businesses were directly engaged, with ten new businesses and multifamily customers starting to compost due to outreach efforts.

#### What's next?

The focus will continue on reducing landfill waste through ongoing recycling events, promoting reuse with business partners and the community, and providing direct outreach and support to businesses for OML compliance. The team will also collaborate regionally on legislative priorities like Extended Producer Responsibility and waste reduction, ensuring Kirkland's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.



## SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE

### **City Operations**

Goal SG-1: Integrate sustainability into every major decision the City makes

Action SG-1.7: Apply for participation in Puget Sound Energy's Commercial Strategic Energy Management Program to optimize energy use and maximize efficiency at Facilities

The City applied for and was accepted into Puget Sound Energy's Commercial Strategic Energy Management (CSEM) program which focuses on the management of utility resources, such as electricity and natural gas. The program emphasizes the development and implementation of an Energy Management Plan (EMP) designed to achieve energy savings through enhanced operational efficiency, targeted maintenance practices, and changes in user behavior. It provides commercial building operators with incentives for adopting low- and no-cost strategies to reduce energy consumption and operational costs. This agreement went into effect on January 8, 2024.

Key incentives available under the program include start-up, performance, target, training, and milestone incentives, awarded based on the achievement of specific energy savings and program deliverables. Participants are required to complete an Energy Management Plan (EMP) and an Operations & Maintenance Program Plan (O&M), overseen by our dedicated energy champion, Justine Mason.

The contract spans a minimum of three years, with an annual energy consumption reduction target of 3%. Performance will be evaluated each year against baseline consumption, with savings attributed to Strategic Energy Management (SEM) activities and other PSE-incentivized initiatives. Additionally, training allowances for SEM-related courses are available, along with requirements for establishing building data and meter resolution.

Goal SG-5: Cultivate community members' knowledge of and participation in, and leadership for civic processes

Action SG-5.4: Prioritize and implement a civic engagement course that provides education about local government and creates an entry point for emerging community leaders

#### **Status:**

In 2024, the City of Kirkland hosted the second annual Kirkland Initiative program. This program is for 20 participants who live in Kirkland and are curious about how the City as an organization works, how to engage and work with the City, how they can become more involved in the work, or have aspirations to one day serve on a City board, commission, or run for City Council.

#### What's next?

The City will be completing an energy audit and commissioning the Justice Center to identify opportunities for energy improvement. Plans are being created to undertake an LED lighting retrofit, and Facilities has been working with the HVAC control vendor to increase efficient system operations



### SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS



### **Economic Diversity**

Goal SB-2: Foster economic diversity throughout the community

**Action SB-2.1:** Track and monitor the makeup of business industries in Kirkland and set a diversification goal.

#### Status:

A diverse set of businesses in a city is important because it fosters a more vibrant economy, promotes innovation, better reflects the community's needs, creates more job opportunities, and allows for a wider range of goods and services to be available to residents, all while enhancing the city's overall cultural richness and reputation. Tracking and monitoring is occurring through our use of Placer.ai and New Business License engagement. Using these resources, the City of Kirkland is working to identify current gaps in industry and ownership. Once these metrics are identified a diversification goal will be set.

### **Green Economy**

Goal SB-4: Support the transition to an equitable, socially-just sustainable businesses community in Kirkland

Action SB-4.2: Promote a training program to assist immigrant and minority-owned new small business owners.

#### Status:

Our Workshops and Pitch Competition program is all inclusive and specifically targets new small business owners, many of which are immigrant and minorityowned. Participants attend five workshops and then pitch their concept to the community. In 2024, the Kirkland Workshops and Pitch Competition launched with a full class of about 45 businesses. One of these business owners was Jazmin Colmenares, owner of JazminColShop. She competed in the Pitch using an interpreter for her first language of Portuguese and won the People's Choice Award.

#### What's next?

The Workshop and Pitch Competition program 2nd year is already taking applications. Staff is looking forward to involving external partners and cities, working to place these businesses, and providing mentors and access to previous business owners.



2024 Pitch Competition program award ceremony (from left to right): Deputy City Manager Jim Lopez, Mayor Kelli Curtis, Council Member Penny Sweet, Peoples Choice winner Jazmin Colmenares, Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold and Council Member Neal Black

## HEALTHY COMMUNITY

### Sustainable Food System

Goal HC-1: Increase the number and geographic diversity of P-Patches or other community gardens by adding five more by 2025 and doubling the existing number by 2030.

**Action HC-1.1:** Develop a funding plan for development and operation of new P-Patches and community gardens.

#### Status:

Temporary community gardens were installed at the Houghton Park and Ride as a means to make interim use of the site and to increase the number of places where food can be grown in the City.

### Recreation and Wellness

Goal HC-12: Strive to rebalance and/or acquire sports fields to achieve the specified service level.

**Action HC-12.1:** Complete an athletic field study that can identify a plan for system wide field improvements or acquisitions

#### Status:

An athletic field study was completed in 2022. Here are some ways this study has influenced policy change over that last few years:

•Staff updated the athletic field policy at the end of 2022 which removed language that prioritized specific sports, such as baseball, softball, soccer, and football to give all sports fair access to field space. This measure provides for more diversity in



Pickleball courts at the Houghton Park and Ride site.

sports being played which can also help create more access to our parks.

- •Policy language was removed that considered and prioritized historic use as a decision-making tool in the allocation process.
- •Free play times for informal, drop-in use were officially added for times when fields are not reserved. An added benefit of allowing free play is encouraging the use of the fields and removal of the financial burden to use the fields while increasing a diversity of users in the community.
- Established a Tournament Request period in advance of the general allocation process to encourage tournaments from out of town to come to Kirkland (tourism development).
- •Updated fee structure to ensure resources are available for ongoing maintenance of the fields.



Newly installed community garden beds at the Houghton Park and Ride site.

### HEALTHY COMMUNITY CONT.



Goal HC-13: Pursue funding measures and/or partnerships that will allow for the expansion of recreation facilities.

**Action HC 13.1:** Build an additional skate park.

#### Status:

A temporary skate park opened at the Houghton Park and Ride in the summer of 2024. Long term plans for a permanent home for the facilities are being developed. Temporary uses will help inform consideration of where to establish more permanent facilities, if warranted.

Action HC 13.3: Evaluate existing recreational programs and facilities to ensure equity for all populations and that they are serving the diverse needs in our community.

#### **Status:**

The Peter Kirk Pool assessment is underway and should be completed early 2025. A facility assessment of the North Kirkland Community Center will start in early 2025.



(Right) Temporary skate park and pickleball courts at the Houghton Park and Ride site.

(Left) From left to right: Mayor Kelli Curtis, Council Member Neal Black, Park's Director Lynn Zwaagstra, Council Member Amy Falcone, Council Member Penny Sweet, Council Member Jon Pascal, Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold and City Manager Kurt Triplett get ready to play pickleball.



#### What's next?

The City will find a permanent home for the park amenities located at the Houghton Park and Play temporary park. The city will finalize the assessment of the Peter Kirk Pool as well as North Kirkland Community Center. Additionally, the City has been in negotiations with the Kraken which may result in a new community center being collocated with the Kraken's iceplex. Staff continue to refine and improve the athletic field reservation process to make the process easier to understand and more streamlined with several changes rolling out in 2025.



### **SNAP!** and Transit Ambassador Program

The Sustainable Neighborhoods Ambassador Program (SNAP!) is a partnership with the Sustainability Ambassadors, a regional non-profit empowering youth through project design, data tracking, and storytelling that advances the City's Sustainability Strategic Plan. The exclamation point at the end of the acronym SNAP! is an emphatic reminder of the Sustainability Ambassadors' mission to "rapidly advance a sustainable future!"





SNAP! is managed by the Department of Planning and Building with a parallel program, Youth Transit Ambassadors, managed by the City's Transportation Division and funded by King County Metro. A passionate team of students from Lake Washington High School, Juanita High School, and the International Community School work year-round on the following projects.

### Youth Orca Card Registration

Student Ambassadors, in collaboration with King County Metro and Kirkland Transportation, have developed strategies to provide youth Orca cards for students at all three high schools with a focus on the freshman class at the time of their orientation. So far, 265 students have been registered with a plan to expand this peer-to-peer campaign to middle schools throughout Kirkland in 2025. The goal is to reduce car use and to normalize the experience of youth taking public transit. Youth under 18 can ride transit for free but it is important to build a new card-carrying mental model for when they turn 18.

To "gamify" the normalizing of transit use among young people, student Ambassadors collaborated with the Transportation Choices Coalition and the City's Transportation Division to develop a Bus Bingo Board with boxes focused on Kirkland locations and activities. All Kirkland families are encouraged to play Bus Bingo, share their transit story, and be part of shifting habits from car commuting to riding the bus.



Bus Bingo Score Card - A fun way to encourage alternative modes of transportation!

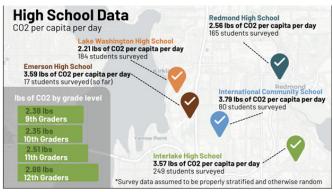
### **Carbon Commute Counting**

Student Ambassadors have developed an annual Carbon Commute Count to establish a baseline for how high school students commute to school, the miles they travel, and a combined carbon footprint per capita. This baseline data story is part of a regional "School vs. School" competition capitalizing on school spirit and cross town rivalries to see who can reduce their student body carbon footprint the most. To support this,

### SUSTAINABILITY AMBASSADORS CONT.



student Ambassadors will be leading a series of campaigns in 2025 on biking to school, carpooling to school, filling up school buses, advocating for electric school buses, and taking public transit. The Carbon Commute Count will be recalibrated in April for Earth Month and May for Bike Everywhere Month with the goal of including more Kirkland schools in these spirited, awareness-to-action campaigns.



Student Ambassadors surveyed fellow students to calculate C02 output for Kirkland's high schools.

### **Electrify Everything**

Student Ambassadors are building the foundation for three campaigns in 2025 related to eliminating the use of natural gas in our homes and switching to all electric appliances and clean energy generation. The Energy Conservation First Campaign is based on students leading by example with a series of short video impact stories in the categories of "Me and My Thermostat," "LED-ing the Way," and "Vampire Plug Loads." Ambassadors designed and published a web-based Hub of Impact Volunteer Hour opportunities and will be working with classes, ASB Student Government, and student clubs to inspire other students to replicate, track, and report the same impact projects for Energy Conservation First.

In preparation for rolling out youth-led, school and community campaigns for "Heat Pumps are Hotcool" and "Solar Powered Youth Future," student Ambassadors have prepared both public presentations and video presentations in collaboration with Energy Smart Eastside. Youth-led campaigns will support City campaigns with a special social media push around the following worldwide events: Earth Hour (March 22), Earth Day (April 22), and Earth Overshoot Day (late July).



Student created graphic for the Heat Pumps are Hotcool campaign.



Student created graphic for the Solar Powered Youth Future campaign.

#### What's next

To encourage youth civic engagement and to showcase youth-led impact projects and school campaigns, Sustainability Ambassadors will be facilitating Town Halls at both the International Community School and Juanita High School in late spring 2025. Town Hall @ School is a civics and sustainability learning exchange that brings together upperclassmen, City staff, and Council representation to practice identifying, sharing, and prioritizing student impact projects in context of staff work plans, Council priorities, and next step actions that measurably advanced the goals of the City's Sustainability Strategic Plan