

VI. Land Use Element

Existing adopted Goals and Policies with reduced descriptive text-4/20/2023
Here is a [link](#) to the full text of the adopted Land Use Element in the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Introduction

Kirkland's existing pattern of land use has served the City well for many years. Over the next 20 years, the real challenge for the community will be how to preserve existing community character in the face of continued population and employment growth. Kirkland is part of a regional and interrelated pattern of land uses. Most land in the City is devoted to housing, and the majority of Kirkland residents commute to other communities to work.

Kirkland is also a balanced community, providing shops, services and employment both for local residents and for those who live in other communities. Kirkland is also a city of neighborhoods – each with its own mix of population, housing, commercial opportunities, and visual features which help form its unique character. The City's residential neighborhoods are generally strong and well established. They are also diverse in housing type, size, style, history, maturity and affordability. More mixed-use residential/commercial centers have developed, including Juanita Village and Downtown Kirkland. The commercial areas are healthy, offer a broad range of goods and services, and provide a strong tax base to help fund public services and facilities. Kirkland has a diverse economic base with several retail centers, mixed-use retail/office districts, a regional health care center, auto dealerships, business parks, industrial complexes and home-based businesses.

B. The Land Use Concept

The fundamental goal of the Land Use Element is to maintain a balanced and complete community by retaining the community's character and quality of life, while accommodating growth and minimizing traffic congestion and service delivery costs. To accomplish this, the Element:

- Seeks a compact and walkable community with shops, services and employment close to home; numerous civic activities and entertainment options; high-quality educational facilities; numerous parks; and a variety of housing choices;
- Identifies the values that must be weighed in managing growth. Goals and policies promote a land use pattern that is orderly, compact, well- designed, and responsive both to the natural and physical environment;
- Proposes a land use pattern that supports a multimodal transportation system and results in more efficient service delivery. Placing urban neighborhoods around commercial areas allows residents to walk or bicycle to corner stores or neighborhood centers, and then connect by transit to other commercial areas. High-capacity transit could connect and serve larger commercial areas, both inside and outside of the community;
- Protects existing residential neighborhoods. Goals and policies support a stable nucleus of single-family housing and more housing options. Higher-density residential areas continue to be located near commercial centers and transportation hubs;
- Supports a range of employment opportunities in the City and sets out standards for vibrant commercial areas. Opportunities for new growth are provided in the Totem Lake Center and Downtown Kirkland. Other existing commercial areas in the City are maintained and strengthened. While not encouraging heavy industry, goals and policies work to preserve

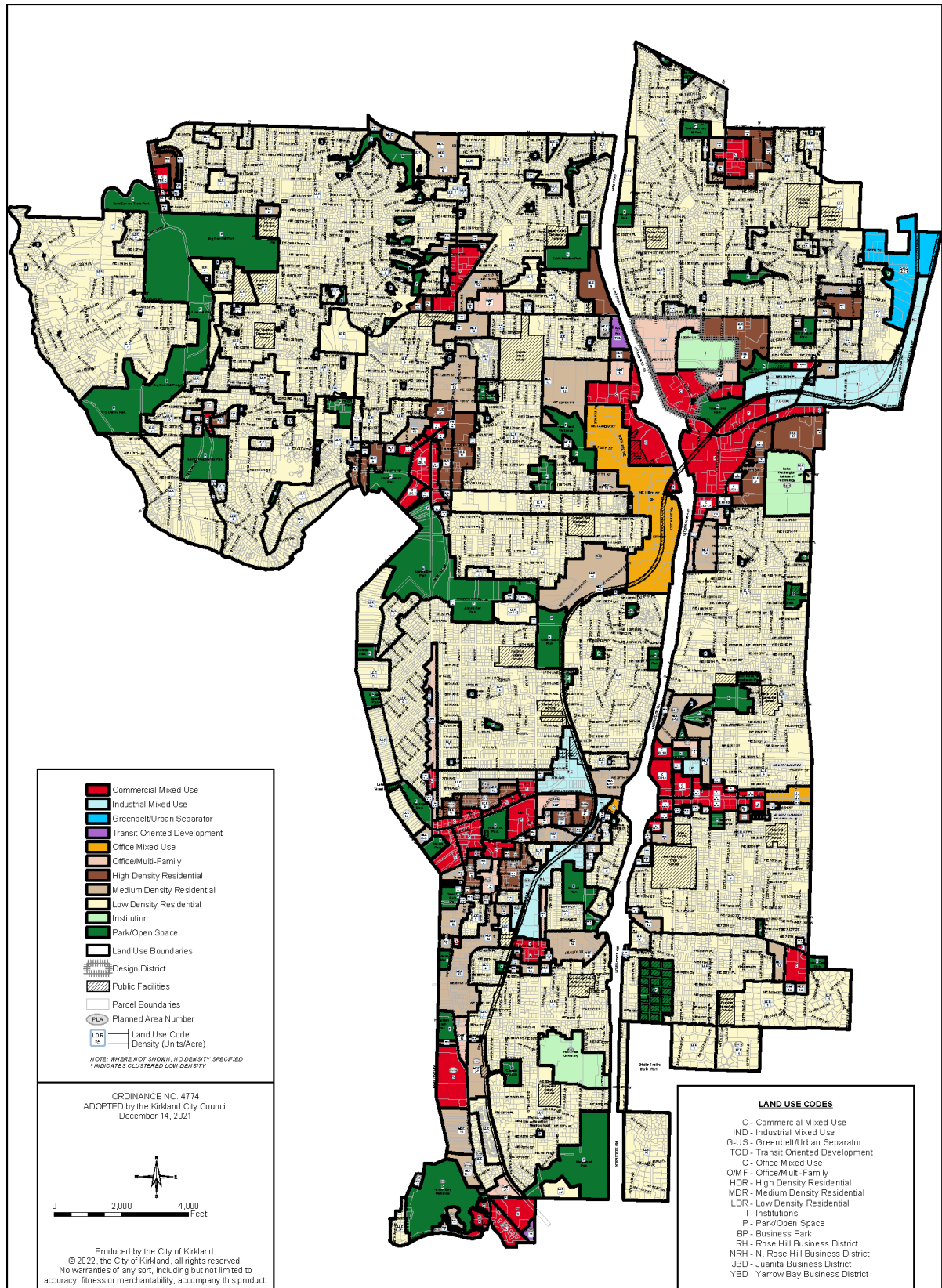
opportunities for higher-paying jobs to locate in the City;

- Encourages preservation of an open space network, including environmentally sensitive areas, recreational facilities, and the shoreline; and
- Acknowledges the City's regional role in working with other jurisdictions and the County to site regional facilities.

C. Land Use Map and Definitions

The Comprehensive Land Use Map (Figure LU-1) indicates where certain types of uses may be appropriate. The Comprehensive Land Use Map identifies areas for a range of housing densities and a variety of nonresidential uses. The map contains land use designations reflecting the predominant use allowed in each area. These designations are reflected in a broad variety of zoning districts on the Kirkland Zoning Map. Within some of these land use designations are mixed-use developments.

EXISTING LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES



D. Land Use Goals and Policies

Growth Management

Washington's Growth Management Act establishes goals to be considered in the development of local comprehensive plans. These goals include concentrating growth in urban areas to provide efficient services and reduce sprawl, supporting transportation choices, providing housing that is affordable to all, and encouraging economic development. VISION 2040 sets an overarching goal of focusing growth in urban areas to create walkable, compact, transit-oriented communities that maintain local character. These goals are consistent with the vision established by Kirkland citizens.

Goal LU-1: Manage community growth and redevelopment to ensure:

- **An orderly pattern of land use;**
- **A balanced and complete community;**
- **Maintenance and improvement of the City's existing character; and**
- **Protection of environmentally sensitive areas.**

Policy LU-1.1: Maintain clear and predictable development regulations that are consistent with City goals and policies.

Policy LU-1.2: Create logical boundaries between land use districts that take into account such considerations as existing and planned land uses, access, property lines, topographic conditions, and natural features.

Policy LU-1.3: Encourage attractive site and building design that is compatible in scale and in character with existing or planned development.

Policy LU-1.4: Create effective transitions between different land uses.

Policy LU-1.5: Regulate land use and development in environmentally sensitive areas to improve and protect environmental quality and avoid unnecessary public and private costs.

Goal LU-2: Promote a compact, efficient, and sustainable land use pattern in Kirkland that:

- **Supports a multimodal transportation system that efficiently moves people and goods;**
- **Minimizes energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and service costs;**
- **Conserves land, water, and natural resources; and**
- **Provides sufficient land area and development intensity to accommodate Kirkland's share of the regionally adopted population and employment targets.**

Policy LU-2.1: Support a range of development densities in Kirkland, recognizing environmental constraints and community character.

Policy LU-2.2: Facilitate infill development and encourage redevelopment of underutilized land.

Policy LU-2.3: Ensure an adequate supply of housing units and commercial floorspace to meet the required growth targets.

Policy LU-2.4: Support development patterns that promote public health and provide opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity and social connectivity.

Land Use/Transportation Linkages

Land use/transportation linkage policies address the relationship between the land use pattern and a

complete transportation system. Separation of jobs and housing means longer commute trips – generally accommodated on the City’s roadways either by private automobile or transit. When shops and services are long distances from residential areas, this also translates into additional vehicle or transit trips. Allowing residential and nonresidential uses to locate in closer proximity provides transportation options, making walking or bicycling a viable option.

Goal LU-3: Provide a land use pattern and transportation network that promotes mobility, transportation choices, and convenient access to goods and services.

Policy LU-3.1: Create and maintain neighborhoods that allow residents and employees to walk or bicycle to places that meet their daily needs.

Policy LU-3.2: Encourage residential development within commercial areas.

Policy LU-3.3: Encourage housing, offices, shops, and services at or near the park and ride lots.

Policy LU-3.4: Locate higher density land uses in areas served by frequent transit service.

Policy LU-3.5: Provide vehicular access for commercial development from arterials or freeways and avoid vehicular access from residential streets.

Policy LU-3.6: Incorporate features in new development projects that support transportation choices.

Policy LU-3.7: Consider reducing minimum parking requirements in the Zoning Code in walkable areas with convenient shops, services and good transit service.

Policy LU-3.8: Create a complementary relationship between adjoining land uses and the Cross Kirkland Corridor and Eastside Rail Corridor, both in terms of short term nonmotorized access and future opportunities for high capacity transit.

Policy LU-3.9: Encourage vehicular and nonmotorized connectivity.

Residential

Most of the land in Kirkland is developed with housing of some type – whether single-family or multifamily homes. Kirkland will continue to be primarily a residential community and preservation and protection of residential neighborhoods is an important goal to ensure future livability. The notion of preserving community character is one that is explored more fully in the Housing and Community Character Elements and the Neighborhood Plans, where careful review of the features that make a neighborhood unique are identified. In the Land Use Element, the general notion of protection of community character is promoted. However, this Element also acknowledges that the community will be growing and that a balance must be struck between providing more housing units and preserving the neighborhoods as they are today. Several of the most important housing issues – affordability, special needs housing, and accessory units – are not addressed in this Element. They are discussed, instead, in the Housing Element.

Goal LU-4: Protect and enhance the character and quality of residential neighborhoods while accommodating the City’s growth targets.

Policy LU-4.1: Maintain and enhance the character of Kirkland’s residential areas.

Policy LU-4.2: Locate the highest density residential areas close to shops and services and transportation hubs.

Policy LU-4.3: Allow for new residential growth consistent with the basic pattern of land use in the City.

Policy LU-4.4: Consider neighborhood character and integrity when determining the extent and type of land use changes.

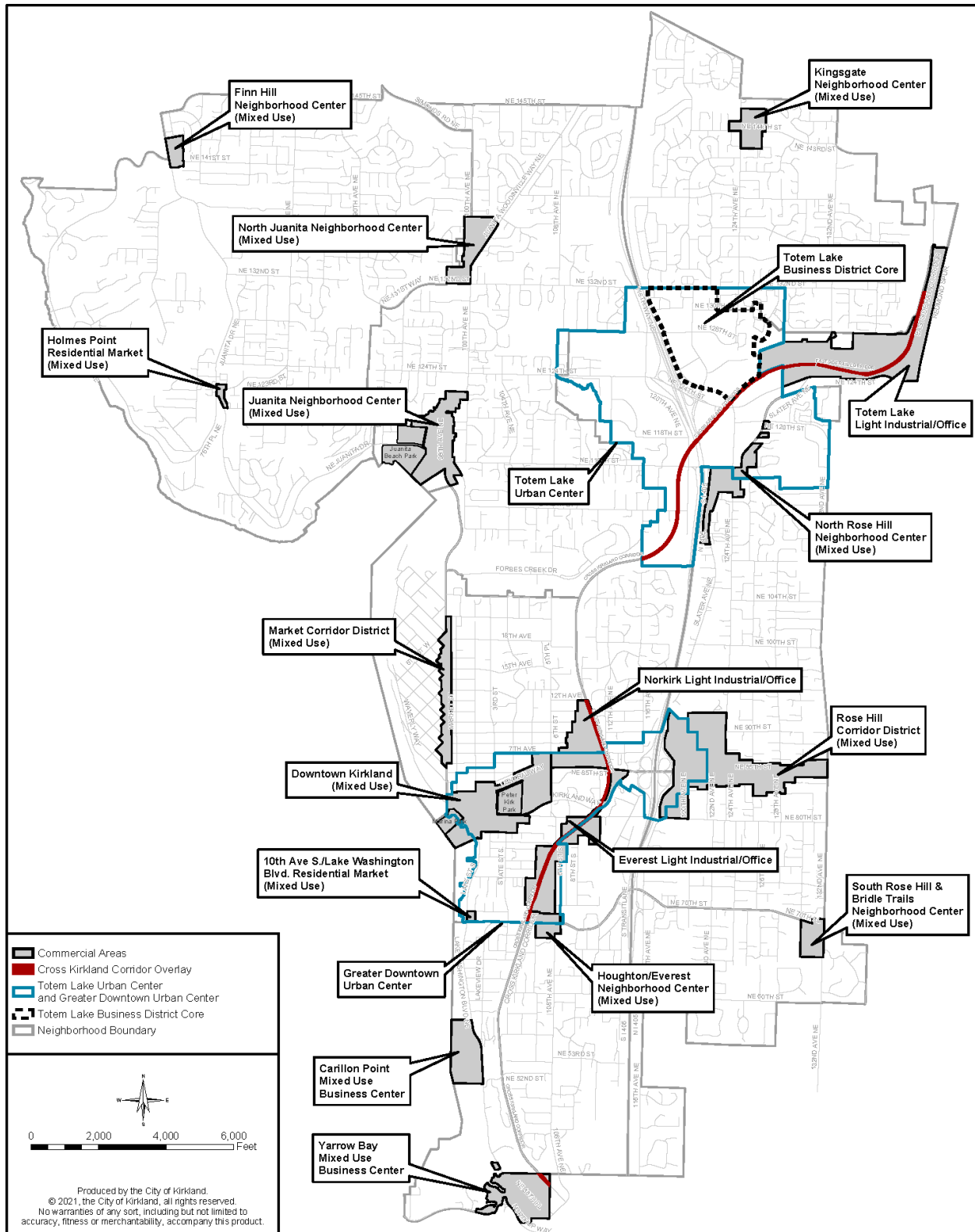
Policy LU-4.5: Allow neighborhoods to propose small scale neighborhood-oriented commercial uses within residential areas to meet local needs and reduce reliance on vehicle trips to meet daily needs.

Commercial and Mixed Use

Commercial land uses are a critical part of the Kirkland community. They provide shopping and service opportunities for Kirkland residents, and also create employment within the City. The tax revenues generated by business help fund the capital facilities and public services that residents enjoy.

Problems that the community faces – traffic congestion, particularly – create concerns for commercial land uses. Along with the need to provide new housing units for future residents, the City will need to designate adequate land area for commercial uses, some of which may employ Kirkland residents. If the opportunity for local employment is increased, the high proportion of residents who work outside the community may be reduced. This in turn would ease traffic congestion by shortening commute trips and making other modes of travel to work more feasible. In addition, many of Kirkland's commercial areas are designated for mixed use development. Mixed use development is a fundamental part of the regional and local growth strategy. As evidenced in areas like Downtown Kirkland and Juanita Village, the mixing of residential and commercial uses creates compact, walkable, transit-oriented communities.

EXISTING LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES



Goal LU-5: Plan for a hierarchy of commercial and mixed use areas serving neighborhood, community, and/or regional needs.

Policy LU-5.1: Reflect the following principles in development standards and land use plans for commercial and mixed use areas:

Urban Design

- Create lively and attractive districts with a human scale.
- Create attractive, pedestrian-oriented streets through building placement and design and by minimizing the obtrusive nature of parking lots.
- Support a mix of retail, office, and residential uses in multistory structures.
- Create effective transitions between commercial areas and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Access

- Encourage multimodal transportation options.
- Promote an intensity and density of land uses sufficient to support effective transit and pedestrian activity.
- Promote a street pattern that provides through connections, pedestrian accessibility and vehicular access.
- Encourage pedestrian travel to and within commercial and mixed use areas by providing:
 - *Safe and attractive walkways;*
 - *Close groupings of stores and offices;*
 - *Placement of parking in structures, underground, or to the back or side of buildings.*

Policy LU-5.2: Maintain and strengthen existing commercial and mixed use areas by focusing economic development within them.

Policy LU-5.3: Enhance and strengthen Kirkland's commercial and mixed use areas consistent with the neighborhood plan for each area.

Policy LU-5.4: Provide opportunities for a variety of employment.

Policy LU-5.5: Support the Greater Downtown area as an Urban Center/Regional Growth Center.

Policy LU-5.6: Maintain and enhance Kirkland's diverse Neighborhood Centers to serve as business centers and as walkable focal points for the local community. Reflect the following principles in development standards and land use plans for these areas:

- Preserve and enhance neighborhood-serving retail, especially grocery stores.
- Promote a mix of complementary uses.
- Support redevelopment at an intensity that helps meet Kirkland's required growth targets in walkable neighborhoods with good transit service.
- Create gathering places and opportunities for social interaction.
- Create and maintain unique places that complement and reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy LU-5.7: Encourage redevelopment and adaptive reuse of Kirkland's Light Industry/Office areas in a manner that supports the existing mix of allowed uses while enabling these areas to evolve into innovative areas for commerce and employment.

Policy LU-5.8: Allow for innovative land use and development within the Cross Kirkland Corridor Overlay where such innovation enhances the recreational, transportation, and economic development potential of the Corridor.

Open Space and Resource Protection

Open space may serve amenity, utilitarian and/or recreational purposes. Open space also may protect and preserve special natural places such as stream corridors, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. As growth continues, the value of open space will increase, providing relief from the urban environment and an opportunity to experience nature inside the City.

Goal LU-6: Establish a coordinated and connected system of open space throughout the City that:

- ***Preserves natural systems,***
- ***Protects wildlife habitat and corridors,***
- ***Provides land for recreation, and***
- ***Preserves natural landforms and scenic areas.***

Policy LU-6.1: Distribute parks and open spaces throughout the City, with particular focus on new facilities in areas of the City facing the greatest population growth, in areas where facilities are deficient, and/or in areas where connections of the open space network could be made.

Policy LU-6.2: Work with adjacent jurisdictions; County, State, federal, and tribal governments; and nonprofit groups to identify and protect open space networks to be preserved within and around Kirkland.

Policy LU-6.3: Consider the City's streets and the Cross Kirkland Corridor as integral parts of the overall open space network.

Policy LU-6.4: Preserve Kirkland's urban separators.

Goal LU-7: Protect and enhance Kirkland's natural resources.

Policy 7.1: Continue to designate and protect critical areas based on best available science, with special consideration to preserving and enhancing anadromous fisheries.

Policy LU-7.2: Decrease energy use, promote renewable energy, and promote public health through land use strategies that promote a mix of housing, employment, and services at intensities sufficient to promote walking, bicycling, and transit.

Essential Public Facilities, Government Facilities and Community Facilities

Essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities serve a variety of populations. Some serve local low-income residents who may not have easy access to private transportation. Others, such as landfills, serve regional waste haulers in large trucks along with local residents. Recognition of the unique characteristics of the clients of these facilities is important to their siting.

Government facilities are uses consisting of services and facilities operated from any level of government. Community facilities are uses that serve the public and are generally of a public service, noncommercial nature and usually operated by nonprofit agencies or organizations.

Goal LU-8: Maintain criteria, regulations and procedures that allow for the siting of essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities.

Policy LU-8.1: Work cooperatively with King County, the State and/or other cities to site essential public facilities.

Policy LU-8.2: Consider the following in siting essential public facilities:

- Accessibility to the people served;
- Public involvement;
- Protection of neighborhoods;

EXISTING LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

- Preservation of natural resources;
- The cost-effectiveness of service delivery;
- Location near transit and mixed-use centers; and
- The goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Policy LU-8.3: Design essential public facilities as well as government and community facilities to reduce incompatibility with adjacent land uses.