



City of Kirkland
Planning and Building
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
425-587-3600 | www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Allison Zike, AICP, Deputy Planning and Building Director
Adam Weinstein, AICP, Planning and Building Director

Date: January 3, 2024

Subject: **2044 Comprehensive Plan - Land Use Element Policy Briefing #1**

Recommendation

Receive a briefing and hold a study session to discuss draft revisions to the Land Use Element goals and policies (see Attachment 1). Provide staff with direction to continue preparing the draft 2044 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element. Staff anticipates presenting at least one additional policy briefing on the Land Use Element prior to the public hearing for the amendments in Spring 2024.

Background

Kirkland 2044 Comprehensive Plan (K2044) Update Process Overview

The City of Kirkland is in the process of conducting a State-mandated update of the Kirkland Comprehensive Plan (Plan) with a target adoption date of mid 2024 (the State deadline for City Council adoption is December 31, 2024). The Comprehensive Plan is the primary citywide guide for how we, as a community, manage growth over the next 20 years (with a horizon year 2044), and is the policy basis that guides all related decisions. The Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies for how the City addresses land use, transportation, housing, sustainability and climate change, parks and open space, human services, and the public facilities and services necessary to support growth.

The K2044 Plan update must be consistent with updated State, regional, and King County policies and plans, along with local plans, as discussed further in the goals and policies subsection below. As part of the process to certify Kirkland's K2044 Plan, the State Department of Commerce will review drafts of the Plan to be sure it is consistent with those plans and mandatory requirements, and will approve the final Plan once it is adopted by City Council (Council).

The Planning Commission (PC) last specifically discussed the Land Use Element at their June 22, 2023 meeting¹. The PC discussed the full list of study issues across all Plan elements during a joint study session with Council on July 18, 2023², at which point staff

¹ https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/planning-amp-building/planning-commission/k2044-comprehensive-plan-update-briefing-land-use-element_pc-packet_6.22.2023.pdf

² https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2023/july-18-2023/3b_study-session.pdf

finalized the list of study issues being considered to address with Plan goal or policy amendments.

Community Outreach and Engagement Activities

Beginning in late 2022, staff conducted a substantial number of public outreach and community engagement activities to implement the K2044 Community Engagement Plan³. In addition to the general K2044 activities above, staff has conducted outreach and engagement activities specific to the Land Use Element. The topics of Land Use and Transportation are interrelated, and the majority of the element-specific activities (listed below) were conducted jointly with Transportation staff leading the Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP) and Transportation Element updates to ensure that updates to goals and policies are complementary, and that the community has the opportunity to learn more about how the two topics relate to each other and must be balanced.

- Land Use and Transportation Survey (584 responses)
- Senior Council Meeting (April 11, 2023)
- Land Use and Transportation Focus Groups (May 1 and May 9, 2023)
- Youth Council Meeting (May 22, 2023)
- Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods (June 14, 2023)

Staff expects to present a summary of community input related to Land Use at the January 11 PC meeting, and will make the survey results available online.

Additional information about the update process can be found in meeting packets, presentations, and other documents and resources that are available on the City's K2044 Comprehensive Plan update webpage⁴.

Land Use Element Review

Overview

The Land Use Element guides future growth in Kirkland and helps establish the appropriate locations for certain types of development (i.e., land uses), the allowed intensity of each land use, and where open space preservation should be located. The Land Use element is the foundational chapter to establish how Kirkland will accommodate our assigned growth targets for the Plan update horizon year of 2044, shown in the table below.

HOUSING UNITS		JOBS	
Existing (2018)	K2044 Target (2019 – 2044)	Existing (2018)	K2044 Target (2019 – 2044)
38,656	13,200 (above 2018 existing)	49,280	26,490 (above 2018 existing)

A capacity analysis basically looks at the City's supply of undeveloped or under-developed land and identifies how much net new development (in terms of housing units

³ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/planning-amp-building/kirkland-2044-comp-plan/community-engagement-plan-k2044-kirkland-comprehensive-plan-finalwappendixabc12152022.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-and-Building/Planning-Projects/Kirkland-2044-Comprehensive-Plan-Update>

and employees/jobs) can be accommodated on this land. The capacity analysis excludes critical areas like wetlands and streams, or other areas that are unlikely to redevelop in the future. Staff and the City's consultant recently completed an initial "no-action" capacity analysis that confirms the City has more than sufficient capacity under existing zoning to accommodate Kirkland's housing and jobs targets, meaning that additional changes to land use designations/zoning are not necessary to meet growth targets. However, such changes may be desirable to help achieve other City-wide objectives related to sustainability, affordable housing, and other topics. Potential changes that would create additional capacity are discussed in the Proposed Land Use Changes subsection below. Staff will be presenting the results of the initial capacity analysis at the January 11 PC meeting.

Key Land Use Policy Issues

There are several study issues and/or policy concepts that staff has explored through the update to the Land Use Element. The list below of Land Use study issues was confirmed by the PC and Council at a joint meeting in July 2023, and will be studied in the forthcoming Kirkland 2044 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The draft revised Land Use goals and policies (see Attachment 1) discussed further in the subsection below incorporate amendments that address many of the issues in the following list, while amendments to address others are still under consideration or being addressed in other Plan elements:

- Citywide affordable housing requirements, including potential for requirements in low-density zones;
- Policies to stimulate production of missing middle housing types;
- Consolidating low-density residential zones for more uniform development regulations in similar zones citywide;
- Exploring appropriate uses and densities on existing neighborhood commercial-oriented sites, along and within walksheds of transit corridors, around parks/open spaces, or other locations while considering equity impacts to housing residents. Will also be studied through the Juanita and Kingsgate Neighborhood Plan Updates, the current cycle of Community-initiated Amendment Requests, and at Houghton Village Shopping Center;
- Introducing more allowances for small-scale neighborhood commercial uses and/or home-based businesses in low-density residential neighborhoods;
- Reducing and/or restructuring parking standards;
- Increasing public access to Lake Washington and other natural areas;
- Concepts that will enable Kirkland to become a more "complete city" (e.g., completing sidewalks, undergrounding overhead utilities, integrating arts into the community);
- Updates to incorporate new legislative requirements, and work at the State legislative level to address middle housing, affordable housing, and climate change;
- Policies to mitigate restrictive covenants or homeowners association restrictions that may be contrary to City policies like encouraging ADUs and middle housing;

- Strategy for converting retail storage facilities into affordable housing and mixed use and affordable housing opportunities; through partnerships with current property owners;
- Policies that streamline and enable deployment of wireless service facilities that are appropriate for the community;
- Strategies to support small businesses (will also be addressed in Economic Development Element);
- Policies that address the balance of jobs to housing needs in the city;
- Streamline development review, design review processes, permit review timing to support increasing the City's housing stock, including affordable housing, middle housing and sustainable green building; and
- Study how to enable a 10-minute neighborhood (land uses, housing, transit needs) around the Bridle Trails Shopping Center, and within the Juanita and Kingsgate neighborhoods.

Proposed Land Use Changes (SEIS "Action Alternative")

In addition to the study issues listed above, there are several areas in the City that are being considered for land use changes that would increase allowed intensity and housing unit or jobs capacity. These proposed changes are being studied in the Kirkland 2044 SEIS as an Action Alternative, and the next run of the City's capacity analysis will include the changes in the Action Alternative to demonstrate how much additional capacity each change would add.

The Action Alternative would include capacity to accommodate additional development, particularly along transit corridors and in commercial centers, and would allow for some additional neighborhood-serving commercial uses in established residential areas. This alternative would include higher density residential zoning along key transit corridors in Kirkland and higher density development in and around commercial and mixed-use areas in Totem Lake and Juanita as described below:

- Par Mac Business Park (Totem Lake): greater permitted density and height to accommodate up to 1,200 units of housing and up to 30,000 square feet of commercial space;
- Totem Lake Southern Industrial Commercial Subarea (Totem Lake, TL 10C, TL 10D, TL 10E, TL10F): changes to enable increases in capacity for housing units and office space;
- Goodwill Site (Juanita): greater permitted density and height to accommodate up to 600 units of housing and up to 15,000 square feet of commercial space;
- Michael's Site (Juanita): greater permitted density and height (from 26 feet to 70 feet) to accommodate up to 350 units of housing and commercial space; and
- Increased Capacity Along Frequent Transit Corridors including Market Street/98th Avenue NE, Lakeview Drive, 108th Avenue NE and NE 70th Street (see Attachment 2).

The Growth Action Alternative will include population and job growth that achieve the City's growth targets, with 13,200 additional housing units and 26,490 additional jobs by 2044 but would include additional, primarily residential, development capacity to help

address community goals for access and housing affordability. Having surplus housing capacity (i.e., in excess of what is required to meet regional planning targets) is intended to offer many more options for housing developing, hopefully easing supply-side constraints. Staff will return to the PC to report out on the Action Alternative capacity analysis run at a future briefing, and will request the PC's final recommendation on the proposed land use changes after the related public hearing in Spring 2024.

Draft Revised Land Use Goals and Policies

While the SEIS and capacity analysis are still in-progress, staff is requesting PC feedback on initial draft revisions to the Land Use goals and policies. Attachment 1 includes a table with all existing Land Use goals, policies, figures, and tables and provides a side-by-side comparison of the existing text with proposed text amendments to-date. As discussed in subsections above, the draft revisions incorporate text amendments that are generally driven by one or more of the following:

- Compliance with required State, regional, or countywide policies;
- Recommendations from the 2022 Equity Review of the Kirkland 2035 Comprehensive Plan⁵;
- Updating specific words or phrases to utilize more current or clearly-defined planning terms (e.g., focusing on “intensity” of uses rather than “density”, phasing out references to “single-family residential” zones);
- Linking Land Use to City functional plans (e.g., Sustainability Strategic Plan; Transportation Strategic Plan; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan);
- Addressing Kirkland 2044 study issues as directed by the PC and Council; and/or,
- Aligning Land Use with the draft Kirkland 2044 Vision and Guiding Principles⁶ and in-progress draft revisions in other Plan elements.

The table in Attachment 1 includes staff notes to further explain the reasoning behind certain text amendments, as well as notes indicating if the amendment is proposed to achieve compliance with a specific policy from an outside agency.

Questions for Planning Commission

The PC should focus on the below questions for discussion while reviewing the memorandum and attachments:

1. Do Commissioners have any questions or feedback about any specific draft revisions to Land Use goals or policies?
2. Are there any policy themes or concepts that you believe need to be incorporated into the draft policies?
3. Do Commissioners have any questions about the ongoing capacity analysis work?

⁵ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/planning-amp-building/kirkland-2044-comp-plan/equity-review-report-kirkland-comprehensive-plan-econorthwest-final20221108.pdf>

⁶ Note: the draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles will be a separate discussion item at the January 11 PC meeting.

4. Is there any additional information that the PC would find helpful for staff to include in a future briefing on the Land Use Element?

Next Steps

With PC feedback on the questions posed above, staff will continue to refine the draft goal and policy amendments. Another important step for the Land Use Element update is completing the land use capacity analysis for the Action Alternative and the environmental review of those proposed changes. Staff will return to the PC in Spring 2024 to present that information and request additional direction on the proposed land use changes. In the meantime, the PC will receive policy briefings for all the other elements within the Plan, as well as briefings on the Juanita and Kingsgate Neighborhood Plan Updates. The PC will hold multiple public hearings on the Plan updates in Spring 2024 and Council will complete final adoption by Fall 2024.

Attachments

1. Land Use Element Draft Goals and Policies
2. Frequent Transit Routes for Additional Residential Density Modeling