



## **CITY OF KIRKLAND**

### **Planning and Building Department**

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Adam Weinstein, AICP, Planning and Building Director  
Allison Zike, AICP, Planning and Building Deputy Director  
Jen Anderer, Associate Planner  
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**Date:** June 13, 2023

**Subject:** K2044 Comprehensive Plan Update Briefing – Land Use Element

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission (PC) receive a briefing on the 2044 Comprehensive Plan update process as it relates to updates to the Land Use Element (the term Element refers to the chapters in the Comprehensive Plan).

### **Summary**

This memo contains the following:

- Kirkland 2044 process overview and status;
- Information on mandatory State, regional and King County regulatory and consistency requirements related to the Land Use Element;
- What we have learned from community input on the Land Use Element thus far;
- List of potential study issues or policy changes being explored for the Land Use Element; and
- Next steps.

### **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 with a target completion 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 of 2044) in terms of land use, transportation, and the public facilities and services necessary to support that growth. The Comprehensive Plan also includes goals and policies for how the City addresses housing, sustainability and climate change, economic development, parks and open space, shoreline management, and more.

The two-year Comprehensive Plan Update (referred to hereafter as K2044) process will be an opportunity to reflect on the kind of community we aspire to become, and to create a policy roadmap to achieve that vision. The process involves staff in each City department, City Council, City Boards and Commissions, and an extensive community outreach and engagement process focused specifically on reaching a wide diversity of perspectives, as has been discussed with Planning Commission in the previous briefing on the K2044 Community Engagement Plan at its [December 8, 2022](#) meeting. The Transportation Master Plan is being updated in conjunction with the K2044 process and will be primarily guided by the Public Works Transportation Division and the Transportation Commission. Land use and transportation are intertwined topics, primarily because land use decisions have traffic and mobility implications, and there is a desire to situate more intensive land uses around transportation infrastructure (particularly transit). Therefore, staff have been conducting the majority of outreach for the Land Use element jointly with Transportation staff to ensure that updates to goals and policies are complementary.

The last major (periodic) update to the Kirkland Comprehensive Plan was in 2015. The [existing Comprehensive Plan](#) contains the City's 2035 [Vision Statement](#) and [Guiding Principles](#), which form the foundation for the goals and policies contained in the General Elements (chapters of the Comprehensive Plan). These two components establish an overall goal of maintaining Kirkland as a livable, sustainable, and connected city, which is still relevant today.

The K2044 Plan update will need to be consistent with updated State, regional, and King County policies and plans, along with local goals, discussed further in the element subsections below. As part of the process to certify Kirkland's K2044 Plan, the State, Puget Sound Regional Council, and King County will review drafts and approve the final Plan once it is adopted by City Council.

More general information about the update process can be found in the briefing memos from [Planning Commission's April 28, 2022](#), [City Council's December 8, 2022](#), and [Planning Commission's May 11, 2023](#) meetings. These meeting packets, presentations, other documents, and additional resources are available on the City's K2044 Comprehensive Plan update webpage at [Kirklandwa.gov/K2044](http://Kirklandwa.gov/K2044).

### Community Outreach and Engagement Activities

Beginning in early 2023, Staff conducted a substantial number of public outreach and community engagement activities to implement the community engagement plan. Below is a summary of general community engagement activities accomplished to date or that are in progress as of June 2023:

- [Community Engagement Plan](#), prepared by Broadview Planning consultants
- [Equity Review Report](#) of existing Comprehensive Plan elements, prepared by EcoNorthwest
- Project webpage updates and listserv email announcements
- Surveys

- Focus Group recruitment focused on priority populations
- Focus Group meetings for Sustainability, Climate Change & Environment, Parks, Land Use, and Transportation elements
- Publication of informational handouts (including introduction materials translated into the four most common languages in the City besides English)
- Presentations to community groups, Boards and Commissions (City Council, Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Youth Council, Senior Council, Human Services Commission), neighborhood associations, and Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods
- Community events (Town Hall on Bikes, Eastside for All event, Kirkland City Hall for All event)
- Tabling events (seasonal events, Evergreen Health Fair, Pride Crosswalk Ribbon-cutting)
- Class projects with Lake Washington and Juanita High Schools and student surveys
- Community-wide visioning event (January 2023)

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 Master Plan (TMP) 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 (503 responses have been received to date; the survey will be open for responses until June 30, 2023)
- 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)

## **Land Use Element Overview**

### Background

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 Comprehensive Plan Update horizon year of 2044, shown in the table below. As shown below, the City has more than sufficient capacity 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.

HOUSING UNITS			JOBS		
Existing (2018)	K2044 Target (2019 – 2044)	Existing Capacity (2023) *	Existing (2018)	K2044 Target (2019 – 2044)	Existing Capacity (2023)*
38,656	<b>13,200</b> (above 2018 existing)	19,595	49,280	<b>26,490</b> (above 2018 existing)	36,082

*\*Note: "Capacity" is the amount of development that would be allowed under existing zoning. This estimate is pending completion of the City's 2044 capacity analysis. Number reflects approximate remaining capacity from K2035 Plan (units/jobs planned for, but not achieved), plus the additional capacity adopted with NE 85th St Station Area Plan.*

This element is intertwined with many other Comprehensive Plan elements, in that other elements will need to take into account the existing and future growth capacity and locations for growth established in the Land Use element. The primary challenge in the Land Use Element will be designing future growth in a way that retains and improves what people already love about Kirkland, while providing additional opportunities for new housing and jobs that are well connected to the region. Attachment 1 contains a list of the existing goals and policies without the corresponding narrative text. The entire existing Land Use Element can be accessed via this [link](#).

The Land Use element contains the goals and policies that address:

- Accommodating regional population and employment targets and needs;
- Community growth and redevelopment in an orderly and balanced manner;
- Equitable access to jobs, housing, services, parks, and economic opportunity;
- The protection of Kirkland's natural environment and resources;
- Open spaces that are connected and utilized by people and wildlife; and,
- The development of government, public, and community facilities.

#### *Statutory and Policy Guidance for Update*

The Land Use Element is a required element in comprehensive plans pursuant to the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA requires that the element designate the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land. It must also include population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth. See Attachment 2 for an overview of State, regional, and County policies that the Land Use Element must be consistent with. The Comprehensive Plan Update will also incorporate or support recommendations and goals from City plans such as the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) 5-Year Roadmap, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, and the Sustainability Master Plan (SMP). Attachment 2 includes a summary of recommendations from local plans that pertain to the Land Use Element.

#### Community Feedback on Land Use Element

To date, comments from the community, survey responses, and discussion at meetings and public outreach events have included the following themes/recommendations:

- Provide opportunities for more housing, especially affordable housing;
- Focus growth in areas of the City that already have a lot of activity, existing neighborhood commercial centers, and along major roads and transit; and
- Create a land use pattern and transportation network that makes it easier to live near neighborhood commercial uses and community facilities.

At the May 2023 Land Use and Transportation Focus Group, staff facilitated a discussion with participants to develop a set of guiding principles. These focus group guiding principles are intended to communicate policy priorities from the perspective of the focus group participants for Planning Commission and City Council to consider in their pending review of draft revisions to the Land Use Element. A summary of the focus groups and the guiding principles are shown in Attachment 3. The focus group guiding principles are centered on: Affordable Housing; Accessible Places; Small/Middle Businesses; Mixed-use; and Green Communities.

#### Key Land Use Policy Issues

Throughout the K2044 Update process, staff anticipates highlighting specific topics or policy areas of focus for the PC to direct attention to, or to request specific feedback on. There are several policy concepts that staff anticipates exploring through the update to the Land Use Element, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Citywide affordable housing requirements, including potential for requirements in low-density zones;
- How to stimulate production of missing middle housing types;
- Consolidating low-density residential zones for more uniform development regulations in similar zones citywide;
- Potential density increases in existing neighborhood commercial-oriented sites, or other appropriate locations (which will also be explored through the Juanita and Kingsgate Neighborhood Plan Updates, and the current cycle of Community-initiated Amendment Requests);
- 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; and,
- Concepts that will enable Kirkland to become a more "Complete City" (e.g., completing sidewalks, undergrounding overhead utilities, integrating arts into the community, etc.).

### **General Questions for Discussion**

- Does the Commission have any questions about what staff has learned from the community through engagement to date?
- Does the Commission have any questions about any of the State, regional, or County requirements for updating the Land Use Element?
- Does the Commission have any feedback on the potential Land Use concepts for study shown above, or any concepts to add?

### **Next Steps**

For the remainder of 2023, staff will continue to conduct the community engagement activities outlined above to gather public input on each Element, attend City Council, Board and Commission meetings for their input, and begin to draft edits to each Element. The goal is to have draft elements of the Comprehensive Plan completed in early 2024 for review by the various Boards and Commissions, with a tentative public hearing set for spring 2024 and final adoption by fall 2024.

Other tasks in the K2044 Update scope include conducting a land use capacity analysis to confirm compliance with Kirkland's assigned job and housing growth targets, updating the Community Profile, updating the Transportation Master Plan (basis for the Transportation Element), and conducting an environmental review of proposed changes. The PC will be briefed on the status of these tasks at future meetings.

### **Attachments:**

1. Existing Land Use Element goals and policies
2. Land Use Element Summary of potential State, Regional, County, and local policy topics for consideration
3. Land Use Element Focus Group Report Out

cc: File CAM22-00023