

Minutes, Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods

November 1, 2023 Hybrid meeting: online and Peter Kirk room

NOTE: Meeting the first Wednesday rather than second, due to schedule collision with City Council using the Peter Kirk room.

Note: Action items are highlighted in yellow.

Neighborhoods attending:

Central Houghton	Lisa McConnell, Jennifer Loy
Everest	Walter Jaccard
Evergreen Hill	
Finn Hill	
Highlands	Launa Johnson
Juanita Neighborhoods	Leo Gilbert
Lakeview	Aaron Jacobson (KAN co-chair)
Market	Liz Hunt, Ken Mackenzie
Moss Bay	Bea Nahon
Norkirk	Janet Pruitt
North Rose Hill	
South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails	Chris Kagen

City Staff/Elected Officials attending:

- Kim Scrivner, Transportation Planner
- Doug McIntyre, Transportation Planner
- Adam Weinstein, Director of Planning and Building
- Kurt Triplett, City Manager
- Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager

Guests:

- Susan Davis, North Rose Hill

7:05pm Introduction

- Chair Aaron Jacobson called the meeting to order
- Round-the-horn introductions

7:06pm Public comments

- None.

7:07pm Kirkland Transportation Plan

- Kim Scrivner, presenting
- Formerly known as the Master Transportation Plan
- Background
 - Coordinated with state and regional planning
 - Growth Management Act (GMA)
 - Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050

- King County planning policies
 - Kirkland Comprehensive Plan
 - Regional coordination with others
 - Kirkland codes and regulations
- This is the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan
 - Also functions as a standalone plan
- Major elements
 - Existing and future conditions
 - Guiding principles, goals, policies, and actions
 - 20-year project list
 - Evaluating existing and future conditions
 - Accommodating all modes and addressing transportation needs
 - Tracking our progress (performance measure and monitoring)
- New/Emerging topics
 - Greater emphasis on safety
 - Greater emphasis on equity and sustainability
 - Transit emphasis including flexible transit, connections, coordination with Metro
 - Curb management
 - Technology and innovation (link with SMART Cities)
 - Freight and truck movements
 - Micromobility: bike share, scooter share, other small devices
- From planning to implementation
 - Comprehensive plan →
 - Kirkland Transportation Plan →
 - Modal plans and design studies →
 - Active Transportation Plan, etc.
 - Capital Improvements Program
 - Zoning code
 - Municipal code
 - Complete Streets ordinance
- Project list development
 - Vision: 20-year capital facilities plan
 - Then, 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan
 - Then, 2-year budget cycle
- Prioritization
 - Identify best match of projects to goals
 - Prioritize which come first
 - Every project gets a prioritization score
 - Help the city make the best use of limited resources
 - Assist decisionmakers in budgeting, planning, and making grant applications
- Community feedback
 - City will send out a map of proposed projects
 - Community members are encouraged to review the map and provide comments

- Neighborhood Association chairs are encouraged to send this out to community members
- Comments will be open until December 31, 2023
- Help the city identify needs, inform the prioritized 20-year project list
- Q: (Susan) 124th Ave. improvements in North Rose Hill: Who is prioritizing the details of the project? Questioning decisions about number of lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks. Is the community consulted?
 - A: That's exactly the kind of feedback we're hoping to hear in our outreach. Our Capital Improvement Plan has a prioritization process as well.
- Q: (Ken) What do you do about projects that are on the list, but people don't actually want them? For example, the Stores to Shores Greenway.
 - A: That's complicated. We had to make some decisions when applying for this grant, and there may be some lessons learned about the outreach part of that process. We received federal money for the project, which was a great opportunity, and the money can't be used for anything else. We did recently change the route to avoid the stairway to Crestwood Park.
 - (Kurt) We are trying to create a safe place for kids to bike and walk, and this project is in service of that.
 - (Ken) There are problems at 12th Ave., which is a major street. And at this same meeting last week we discussed improvements to 7th Ave. The answer from the city was, "When we're at 30% we'll come back to you." With this Greenway project, we're learning that at 30%, you can't change much.
 - A: We're trying to address this through the prioritization process, apply some objectivity to how the city invests its funds.
 - (Leo) "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good." There is some tradeoff of outreach vs. getting things done. I'm a vocal proponent of alternative transportation and support adding infrastructure such as sidewalks and protected bike lanes.
 - (Chris) Public input and feedback doesn't have to look like a public meeting that is sometimes a checkbox for outreach. Identify key stakeholders to involve early in the process.
 - (Lisa) Some projects are "waiting for development to happen," and we need the sidewalks or other improvements sooner rather than later. I'd like to see more flexibility to do quick-win, small projects (like a simple crosswalk, when it may trigger all sorts of expensive engineering).
 - (A) Just since 2021 there has been a huge increase in construction costs. It is indeed difficult to balance community priorities against costs. We are subject to a lot of laws (like the American Disabilities Act, or stormwater requirements) that complicate projects. We can't do an "interim" project that will have long-term issues.
 - (Susan) We need a sharrows campaign, to teach drivers what the marking actually means (the bike "share the road" symbol). I've been honked at for being in the lane, when it's marked with a sharrows.

- (Jennifer) Recommend reducing the agenda, as we're not getting a full, robust conversation.

7:55pm Neighborhood Plan process

- Adam Weinstein presenting
- The Comprehensive Plan mandates a template for neighborhood plans.
 - It's been the intention to modify the update process.
 - From the 015 Comp Plan: "The intent is to make the neighborhood plans concise and streamlined."
- The Neighborhood Plan Framework was updated January 26, 2018
 - Currently updating Juanita and Kingsgate plans
 - Following the 2044 Comp Plan process, moving to updating all Neighborhood Plans on the 10-year Comp Plan Update cycle
- Why change?
 - We have robust city-wide plans now (functional plans, master plans, etc.)
 - Staff resources could be dedicated to City-wide initiatives.
 - Reduce redundancies, ensure greater policy consistency.
 - Q: (Lisa) Can you define redundancies?
 - A: Example: Missing middle housing initiatives don't need to be repeated in each neighborhood plan if they're in the Comp Plan.
 - Neighborhood Plans can be updated as needed, even yearly, if necessary, as part of the incremental Comp Plan update process
- Q: (Liz) Neighborhood Plans are a creative, forward-thinking process. This change sounds like the opposite: focusing on exceptions from the larger plan, rather than approaching proactively from the hyperlocal neighborhood character.
 - (Kurt) You don't need to wait for a planner to approach you for a plan update! People used to complain that it had been 20 years since the last update. This process can offer more flexibility and access.
 - (Susan) What is the City expecting from KAN and neighborhood associations? And what has been the outreach method in working with the Juanita and Kingsgate plan updates?
 - (Adam) We do reach out to anyone who lives, works, or plays in Kirkland.
 - (Jennifer) There's "watercooler talk" that the City is trying to move away from neighborhood plans. And I'm hearing that the neighborhoods perceive value in doing a periodic deep dive into the planning process. Is it still important to have some staff who dive deeply as well, rather than being an inch deep and a mile wide across all of the city every ten years?
 - (Adam) Half of our planning staff is dedicated to neighborhood plans now, and that limits their availability for citywide work, like sustainability initiatives and affordable housing, that will benefit the entire community.
 - (Kurt) It's also about what we're required to do by the state; we have responsibilities to respond to many large-scope requirements.
 - (Adam) And not every plan seems to require a deep dive. Some of our plan updates have been relatively shallow.
- CARs (Lisa)
 - Citizen vs. Community Initiated Request processes

- The community version requires notifying all affected property owners, certify that you talked to all of them
- Neighborhood Plan process has been more effective in implementing broad community policy
- (Adam) CAR is not the process we envision updating the plans when needed, within the 10-year Comp Plan cycle
 - Identify an update need
 - Add to the planning work program, dedicate staff as needed
 - Actually could provide more update opportunity
 - (Lisa) Such a process gives City Council (and staff) the opportunity to say they can't accommodate the workload, reject proposed changes
- (Ken) We create staff positions all the time with dedicated tasks. If it takes two full-time employees (FTEs) to support neighborhood plan updates, then let's recognize that and dedicate those staff. Don't rob the neighborhoods.
 - (Kurt) The budget process, through the City Council, is very complex. We don't have two FTEs dedicated today, really; we have a work plan and Neighborhood Plans are highly prioritized on that list.
 - (Kurt) Just because a topic moves out of the Neighborhood Plan to the broader Comp Plan doesn't mean that you don't have input anymore. You still have a voice in the Comp Plan process.
 - (Ken) But you're losing some of the local involvement, the impetus that draws residents into the neighborhood planning process because of its hyperlocal flavor. When the staff or Council talk about "a city without walls," it sounds like the city is killing neighborhoods.
 - (Kurt) We're not killing neighborhoods. We do want to reach out to a more diverse population, get more voices into the process.
 - (Bea) By the very virtue of pulling some common elements into the Comp Plan, aren't you going to end up with Neighborhood Plans that are more manageable, that can be updated on a regular cycle the way that they have been, in a robust local process?
 - (Lisa) We've had a lot of KAN discussions and trainings about how to reach out more effectively to our community members (young people, renters, business owners, ...). If the City finds a successful recipe for that, each Neighborhood Association would implement it in a red-hot minute.
 - (Adam) The City is reaching out in innovative ways: through the schools, in parks, in experimental methods of survey and contact.
 - (Jennifer) Can the City share that outreach with KAN and the neighborhood associations? Why do there have to be parallel and separate methods of outreach?

- (Ken) Liz and I are trying to get the Market neighborhood moving and we're encountering apathy: "They don't care what I think or do." The Plan Update process is a way to engage those people, and diminishing that process will push apathy even further. We've been in a "golden age" of neighborhood planning and that could explain reluctance to change.
- (Kurt) City staff are deeply committed to this city, and how to get people engaged and make the city better. Some of why you don't have people engaging is because a lot of residents actually love the city. They come to events and tell us so. And our City Councilmembers, who direct the staff, do live in Kirkland and want it to be a city they want to live in.
- (Bea) Is the process change decision made? Can we turn this ship around?
 - (Kurt) Every budget cycle involves priorities, and the City Council can put those priorities where they want. This proposal to change the process is a working document right now.
 - (Ken) At the last KAN meeting, the language suggested that this is a done deal. Who would we need to talk to?
 - (Kurt) The Council. There have not been a formal plan for updating neighborhood plans! This provides a predictable, regular process. It will always come down to a resource and budget consideration. I will support this update process to Council, as it's nimble enough to address changes during the cycle, as well as a predictable larger cycle. What I'm hearing is, how do we keep community involved? How do we include people in the process?
- (Liz) How is the update of functional plans (sustainability, transportation, etc.) going to change to encourage neighborhood-specific perspective, if we're moving that material out of the Neighborhood Plans?
 - (Adam) Those plans all go through an update process. Some of them are not very neighborhood-specific, like the sustainability plan, but something like the Urban Forestry Plan may have more opportunity to reach out for local perspectives. Those plans always have applied to all neighborhoods.
- (Chris) The prior Neighborhood Plan update process hasn't been perfect, either. In the last South Rose Hill/Bridle Trails update cycle, a small working group addressed a broad range of topics ... and some residents felt that was a mistake in hindsight. Perhaps it's better to have people who care about housing participate in update of the housing part of the Comp Plan, people interested in

transportation participate there, etc. And I appreciate that the city has resources to reach out to residents in ways that neighborhood associations may not be able to afford or effect: surveys, mailings, personal contact at city functions, etc.

- DEIB (Erika)

- I came to this meeting seeking partnership
- Appreciate the comments about reaching out to young people, renters, etc.
- I want the Neighborhood Associations to be a great point of engagement for residents
- Some people have difficulty in engaging with government
- Email lists don't build community; people build community

Neighborhood updates / DEIB

- Deferred due to time

9:03pm Roundtable

- Everest
- Evergreen
- Finn Hill
- Highlands
- Houghton (Lisa)
 - Get your Neighborhood Safety Project proposals in by December
- Juanita (Leo, Margaret)
- Lakeview
- Market (Liz)
- Moss Bay (Bea)
- Norkirk
- SRH/BT (Chris)
- Totem Lake

9:05pm Closing

- Should we have a December meeting? Vote by hands
 - Majority "yes" in the room
 - Aaron will email the group
- Adjourned at 9:07pm
- Next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2024 – but we might squeeze in a December meeting