

ATTACHMENT B: TSP SECTION NARRATIVES

The TSP includes greater detail, context, and the full vision for the transportation system expanding beyond what is included in the Transportation Element.

In order to give the Transportation Commission a preview on the expanded plan, some additional narrative components are included noted for review.

Curb Management

Curb management is the organization of a wide range of public activities and infrastructure features that are found along the edge of the public right-of-way, typically the sidewalk curb of a public street. Those activities include roadway travel lanes, vehicle parking (general, temporary and ADA), transit stops, electric charging stations, utilities, delivery services and loading zones, app-based ride-hailing services, sidewalks, bike lanes, bike parking, parklets, street cafes, or other business activities.

The City is seeing an increased demand for a large and growing number of various curbside uses which has resulted in increased competition for curb access. Curb management refers to the policies, systems, services, and strategies that support, regulate, and prioritize all of these activities at the curb. The Transportation goals and policies identify an action to develop a Curb Management Strategy to implement the Vehicle Network Management goal. The Curb Management Strategy will provide context and strategies to better manage and prioritize how the curb is used. It will also outline policies that will guide the decision-making process for changes in curb use based on new projects or changing priorities.

Curb space is varied and has unique local conditions through Kirkland. The City has not yet conducted a robust analysis on the use of curb space to better understand how to manage it. Efficient use of curb space is essential to support growing regional centers, particularly as technology evolves and new mobility services come to Kirkland. As Kirkland grows, the City needs to plan for the use of this important space for the community and ensure the best plan is in place for its utilization.

Neighborhood Greenways

Neighborhood Greenways are a select network of low speed, low volume residential streets prioritized for walking and bicycling through the use of signage, pavement markings, and traffic calming and control measures. The purpose of a Neighborhood Greenway is to provide a route for people of all ages and abilities to feel safe walking and riding bicycles as a comfortable alternative to bike lanes on busy arterials. Neighborhood Greenways are an important part of the citywide bicycle network to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, regional trails, and other destinations. As such, there are a number of policies and actions related to expanding their development:

Policy T-2.2: Prioritize, design, construct, operate, and maintain a connected network of

pedestrian and bicycle facilities in a manner that maximizes safety and mobility to promote an active and healthy community for people of all ages and abilities

h) Prioritize and construct a network of Neighborhood Greenways.

i) Update the guidelines for Neighborhood Greenways from lessons learned from implementation and as best practice designs change.

j) Establish a procedure to evaluate the operational and safety impacts of Greenways before and after project implementation.

Policy T-2.3: Make walking, rolling and bicycling more intuitive and easier to navigate.

b) Ensure the network of greenways and the bicycle route system are well signed and easily navigable

In 2017-2018, the City developed the Kirkland Neighborhood Greenways Guide for Implementation¹ in coordination with an external stakeholder advisory group and the Transportation Commission. This document functions as a standards document for Greenways and includes a conceptual network map with considerations for final routing through the design process, design details, prioritization of individual greenway projects, outreach schedule, and lastly performance measures to monitor the success of a greenway. These performance measures include 20 mph 85th percentile vehicle speeds (meaning 85% of vehicles are traveling at or below 20mph), 2,000 maximum average daily traffic, 100% safe intersection crossings, and a 1% increase in non-motorized use per year post construction.

Along with development of the guidelines document, in 2017 design was initiated for the first two Neighborhood Greenways in Kirkland, 128th Avenue NE and NE 75th Street. (North and South Rose Hill). Since completion and monitoring of those greenways, as well as design for a third greenway, there are a number of lessons learned to incorporate and update the greenways guide for implementation. Updating this guide will satisfy a number of actions identified above.

¹ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/public-works/pdfs/kirkland-neighborhood-greenways-guide-for-implementation.pdf>

Transit Strategy

INTRODUCTION:

Why is Kirkland experiencing service reductions?

King County Metro's North Eastside Mobility Project ("NEMP") was initiated in 2017 and entailed a comprehensive review and proposed changes for north Eastside transit and mobility services. The NEMP recommendations were predicated on frequent and less circuitous service with convenient transfers and was scheduled to begin in March, 2020 which coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in immediate service reductions. This made the once promised convenient transfers infrequent and unpredictable. Since that time, Kirkland has yet to see the full NEMP service changes implemented, riders have not yet experienced many of the reliable and convenient transfers once promised and the transit services that connect Kirkland are still experiencing reductions in service as of four years later. Without convenience and predictability, Kirkland residents have reverted to other modes of travel, primarily single-occupant vehicles (SOVs). Vehicle volumes have also reached, and in some cases exceeded, pre-pandemic levels. If bus transfers and service levels are restored, Kirkland's ridership will return based on what the City is hearing from the community.

As Metro's post-COVID transit ridership trends have shifted to serve more non-commute trips, it is important that Kirkland advocate that transit providers further invest in the communities that offer the services and amenities supporting complete communities by revising service to meet the current needs.

Kirkland supports investments that align with equity values, but also acknowledges that there are long-term implications to investing in these areas without similar investments throughout the County, including in areas that rank lower in equity metrics. Kirkland's efforts to build a complete community are ongoing and should be accounted for when Metro invests in transit service throughout the County.

What is the City's plan to address transit needs?

A comprehensive transit study is proposed to better define the scope of opportunities and constraints related to transit service in Kirkland and identify how Kirkland can better advocate for increased transit service with our transit partners Metro and Sound Transit. Contents of the study will include analysis of existing and future transit service and capital planning to inform decision-making, and how the city can best plan for and implement transit supportive improvements that will serve more Kirkland residents.

DRAFT TSP SECTION - TRANSIT STRATEGY:

As the City of Kirkland continues to grow in population, it plays an increasingly larger role in regional mobility with two designated urban centers creating, more job and housing opportunities, driving greater demand for transportation options to get from one place to another. A foundational solution to these critical mobility challenges is fast, reliable, and

frequent public transit service.

Over the 20-year planning horizon in coordination with transit service providers, Kirkland strives to retain existing transit service, including flexible on-demand services such as Metro Flex; restore any suspended or reduced service due to the COVID-19 pandemic; implement two new bus rapid transit routes with the King County Metro RapidRide K Line and the Sound Transit STRIDE; and support other transit-supportive capital projects to enhance passenger access or service speed and reliability to make transit a more attractive and convenient mode choice. As Kirkland has grown and diversified, there is increasing demand for transit options and transit service has become an increasingly important component of the planned transportation system and supportive land use and is an integral part of Kirkland's efforts to be inclusive and sustainable.

The recent impacts resulting from the COVID pandemic have significantly and broadly impacted transit both locally and as a nationwide trend. Beginning in mid-March of 2020, demand for transit service of all types fell sharply as residents and employees throughout the region, who were able to do so, worked from home in accordance with public health guidance or lost employment. As a result, King County Metro suspended service across the system and Kirkland was impacted as transfers became infrequent and unpredictable. Without convenience and predictability, Kirkland residents have reverted to other modes of travel, primarily single-occupant vehicles (SOVs). If bus transfers and service levels are restored, Kirkland's ridership will return. Metro is still working to restore service across the County, and Kirkland is still not to the service levels in place as promised through service changes prior to the pandemic. However, in the wake of the pandemic, travel patterns and local priorities have changed and there is greater interest in shifting from peak services to all day services. The City of Kirkland must be positioned to be flexible and opportunistic to meet the transit demand needs of the community now and into the future and develop a cohesive transit strategy.

The City's priorities for transit service can be summarized as follows:

- Retain existing transit service.
- Implement K-Line and STRIDE bus rapid transit projects
- support other transit-supportive capital projects to enhance passenger access and service speed and reliability and make transit a more attractive choice in Kirkland.
- Phase-in restoration of the North Eastside Mobility Project (NEMP) service changes to restore ridership
- Retain and expand MetroFlex to weekend service and retain Community Van flexible transit services

Transit Supportive Policies in Kirkland

Through these transit supportive policies, Kirkland has invested in becoming a complete community, offering everyone easier access to the necessary daily services and amenities. Much of this is predicated on frequent and reliable transit to support the land uses that Kirkland has implemented.

Housing Density and Diversity

Kirkland has spent the past decade implementing smart growth policies. Density has been focused on two regionally-designated urban growth centers linked by transit: Totem Lake and Downtown/NE 85th Street Station Area. Thousands of units of housing and hundreds of

thousands of square feet of commercial and retail space have been built in both centers. Future jobs and housing growth is anticipated to continue in these urban centers as well as along frequent transit routes. Both Totem Lake and Downtown centers are built around existing transit centers. The NE 85th St Station Area will soon have a Sound Transit Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station on I-405 that will serve commuters connecting throughout the region with frequent and reliable service.

Kirkland has mandatory affordable housing requirements in both centers. In particular, the NE 85th Street Station Area has some of the most aggressive affordability requirements in the region.

Kirkland is a founding member of the partnership between King County and East King County Cities, ARCH, A Regional Coalition for Housing, and is a leader in the creation of affordable housing. There are over 1,000 units of affordable housing under construction in Kirkland right now, all in the urban centers near transit centers. While other communities fight against the creation of affordable housing in their communities, Kirkland embraces and implements it in a meaningful way. Considerations for additional transit service throughout King County should take these actions into account.

The thousands of new lower-income residents will be able to live where they work and will need transit to thrive, consistent with both the City's and King County equity goals. These Kirkland residents will ride transit to get where they need to go.

Sustainability

Kirkland has been a strong regional partner in combatting and adapting to climate change. Kirkland has adopted its own emissions reduction targets, is a member of King County Cities Climate Collaborate, K4C, and has adopted a comprehensive Sustainability Strategic Plan to accomplish climate resilience and many related environmental goals.

These sustainability goals are woven throughout Kirkland's comprehensive plan, which prioritized urban centers, and walkable 10-minute neighborhoods linked by transit.

Transportation

The TSP includes Goal T-3 to Support and promote a transit system as a high value option for many trips. This includes policies and actions to support transit and passenger facilities, transit-oriented development and includes a transit needs study.

Next Steps

A first major milestone in developing and implementing Kirkland's cohesive transit strategy is the development of a transit study. A comprehensive transit study will better define the scope of opportunities and constraints related to transit service in Kirkland and identify how Kirkland can better advocate for increased transit service with our transit partners Metro and Sound Transit. Contents of the study will include analysis of existing and future transit service and capital planning to inform decision-making, and how the city can best plan for and implement transit supportive improvements that will serve more Kirkland residents.