

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**AGENDA TITLE:** Designate Greater Downtown Kirkland as an Urban Center in the King County Countywide Planning Policies

**PRESENTED BY:** Jay Arnold, Deputy Mayor, City of Kirkland  
Adam Weinstein, Director of Planning and Building, City of Kirkland

**SUMMARY**

This staff report was prepared in advance of an initial briefing on July 24 about a proposed Urban Center in the City of Kirkland. The City of Kirkland is proposing that Greater Downtown Kirkland be designated as an Urban Center in the Countywide Planning Policies. This designation is supported by Policy LU 5.5 in the City's Comprehensive Plan, adopted by City Council in 2015:

**Policy LU 5.5: Evaluate the potential of designating the area in and around Downtown Kirkland as an Urban Center.**

*The existing planned density for housing and planned intensity of employment in or near Downtown Kirkland may meet the requirements for an Urban Center designation. The primary advantage of an Urban Center designation would be opening up potential funding sources for Downtown infrastructure to support existing and planned growth. Essential to the evaluation would be ensuring that such designation is consistent with existing plans for Downtown Kirkland.*

The Urban Center designation would be consistent with existing plans for Greater Downtown Kirkland, including the adopted Moss Bay Neighborhood Plan (which focuses residential and commercial growth in Downtown), and would help leverage the significant regional investments in high capacity transit that have been made at the Downtown Kirkland Transit Center and that will be in place by 2024 at the Interstate 405/NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station. Greater Downtown Kirkland is current experiencing significant growth, in accordance with existing planning documents, with 1,723 market-rate residential units, an additional 126 affordable housing units and nearly 900,000 square feet of commercial space in the planning pipeline.

## **BACKGROUND**

Location: The area proposed for the Urban Center is shown on the attached map. The proposed center is 519 acres and includes the Moss Bay Neighborhood, including the existing Central Business District, nearby areas with existing or planned higher-density commercial and residential uses, and the area surrounding the I-405/NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street BRT station.

Land Use and Current Conditions: The proposed center is zoned almost exclusively for commercial or multifamily uses. The proposed center currently has over 6,700 residents and over 17,000 jobs. The proposed center is home to three of the top five employers in Kirkland, including the City of Kirkland and Google.

Projected Growth: Planned growth for 2035 would increase the density in Greater Downtown, adding an estimated 9,700 jobs and almost 4,000 dwelling units, with an estimated 39,000 people living and working within the proposed urban center.

## **COMMITMENT TO BUILDING AN URBAN CENTER**

Downtown Kirkland was rezoned for high density mixed use development as part of the 1987 neighborhood planning process, in order to foster a walkable district with land uses that could support frequent transit service. The commitment to creating a downtown Urban Center continued with the 2001 Downtown Strategic Plan, which further promotes mixed use development, pedestrian friendly design, and multimodal connections.

As described above, as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, the area in and around Downtown Kirkland was identified as a candidate for nomination as an Urban Center. Alternative 2 of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update identified both the existing Totem Lake Urban Center and the Downtown as areas targeted for growth. The Kirkland City Council endorsed the Urban Center designation process for Downtown Kirkland as part of the 2018-2020 Planning Work Plan on February 20, 2018, and again as part of the 2019-2021 work plan on April 2, 2019.

Also included in the 2019-2021 City Council-adopted Planning Work Program is the development of a Station Area Plan for the neighborhood surrounding the I-405/NE 85<sup>th</sup> BRT Station (much of which is encompassed within the proposed Greater Downtown Urban Center). Although existing adopted planning documents would allow for transit-supportive development surrounding the BRT station, the Station Area Plan would address at a more fine-grained level urban design, economic development and other aspects of higher-density development in the area.

In addition to the Moss Bay Neighborhood Plan, the proposed Greater Downtown Urban Center includes elements of four other neighborhood plans (Rose Hill, Everest, Norkirk, and Highlands), all of which are included as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Although the proposed Urban Center includes several independent neighborhood plans, the Urban Center itself comprises a connected district and the City is currently working on plans to enhance transit, bike, and pedestrian connections between the area surrounding the planned I-405/NE 85<sup>th</sup> BRT Station and what is considered the historic Downtown along the Lake Washington shoreline. As part of the Urban Center application process, staff are at work on a consolidated Urban Center Plan that will include applicable elements of the various neighborhood plans.

## **PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC) CRITERIA FOR URBAN GROWTH CENTERS SUMMARY**

The proposed Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Growth Center is consistent with the PSRC Urban Growth Center Criteria. The vision for the proposed center is compatible with VISION 2040 in that it accommodates growth within already-urbanized areas to create a walkable, compact, and transit-oriented community. With 519 acres, the proposed center meets the minimum criteria for existing and planned activity units, is well-connected in terms of mobility and transportation choices, and is well positioned from a market and policy standpoint to absorb regional growth. Existing conditions, such as a walkable street grid, proximity to shops and services, and a good mix of residents and employment, create a great environment for continued growth. Further discussion of compatibility with PSRC criteria can be found in Attachment 2.

## **APPLICABLE COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES**

The following discussion details the consistency of the proposed Greater Downtown Urban Center and applicable Countywide Planning Policies.

### **DP-29 Concentrate housing and employment growth within designated Urban Centers.**

Long-standing City of Kirkland policy documents, including the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans for the Greater Downtown area, have concentrated residential and employment growth in the Totem Lake Urban Center, Kirkland Central Business District, and other areas within the proposed Urban Center. Assuming buildout of land uses pursuant to existing planning documents, the Greater Downtown Urban Center would contain 8,180 residential units and 26,800 jobs.

|   | Existing | 2035 Planned |
|---|----------|--------------|
| <b>Buildable Area (Acres)</b>             | 519      |              |
| <b>Population</b>                         | 6,745    | 13,006       |
| <b>Population per Acre</b>                | 13.0     | 25.1         |
| <b>Total Employment</b>                   | 17,059   | 26,800       |
| <b>Employment per Acre</b>                | 32.9     | 51.6         |
| <b>Dwelling Units</b>                     | 4,242    | 8,180        |
| <b>Dwelling Units per Acre</b>            | 8.2      | 15.8         |
| <b>Population and Employment</b>          | 23,804   | 39,806       |
| <b>Population and Employment per Acre</b> | 45.9     | 76.7         |

**DP-30**      **Designate Urban Centers in the Countywide Planning Policies where city-nominated locations meet the criteria in policies DP-31 and DP-32 and where the city’s commitments will help ensure the success of the center. Urban Centers will be limited in number and located on existing or planned high capacity transit corridors to provide a framework for targeted private and public investments that support regional land use and transportation goals. The Land Use Map in Appendix 1 shows the locations of the designated Urban Centers.**

The current proposal for the Greater Downtown Urban Center is supported by over 30 years of planning committed to creating a high density mixed use urban center in the downtown core and surrounding areas. The existing Kirkland Downtown Transit Center connects the center with other regional cores (e.g., Seattle, Downtown Bellevue, and Downtown Redmond) and reaches High Capacity Transit standards at peak times.

In addition, as noted above, the proposed Urban Center encompasses the BRT station planned for the intersection of I-405 and NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street, as part of the Sound Transit 3 package of transportation improvements. Under existing conditions, adequate pedestrian and bus connections exist between the planned BRT Station and the Downtown Transit Center. However, connectivity will be further enhanced with completion of the Station Area Plan (scheduled for completion in 2021) and ongoing collaboration between City staff and King County Metro to improve bus service on Central Way (the main link between the BRT Station and the traditional Downtown). Regional transportation funding would be useful in improving this connection.

**DP-31**

**Allow designation of new Urban Centers where the proposed Center: Encompasses an area up to one and a half square miles;**

The proposed Urban Center is 519 acres or 0.81 square mile. The boundaries of the proposed center can be found on the attached map.

**and has adopted zoning regulations and infrastructure plans that are adequate to accommodate:**

- i) A minimum of 15,000 jobs within one-half mile of an existing or planned high-capacity transit station;**

The Urban Center would accommodate 26,800 jobs, all of which would be within one-half mile of the two existing/planned high capacity transit stations in the area. In addition, existing planning policies and the existing urban fabric of Downtown Kirkland support an area that is also a high-quality place for high employment densities, including a small-scale, walkable street grid; a historic, pedestrian-oriented commercial district; excellent bike infrastructure; and easy access to parks adjacent to Lake Washington.

- i) At a minimum, an average of 50 employees per gross acre within the Urban Center; and**

Based on existing planning documents, the City of Kirkland anticipates 26,800 jobs within the proposed center by 2035, with an average of 51.6 jobs per acre.

- ii) At a minimum, an average of 15 housing units per gross acre within the Urban Center.**

Based on existing planning documents, the City of Kirkland anticipates 8,180 residential units within the proposed center by 2035, with an average of 15.8 units per acre.

**DP-32**

**Adopt a map and housing and employment growth targets in city comprehensive plans for each Urban Center, and adopt policies to promote and maintain quality of life in the Center through:**

A map of the planned land uses within the proposed center is attached. Housing and growth targets for the Urban Center are extrapolated from those in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The Moss Bay Neighborhood Plan, which includes the central business district and surrounding neighborhoods, the Rose Hill Neighborhood Plan, as well as individual elements within the Comprehensive Plan contain all the relevant polices for the proposed Urban Center. These policies promote walkability, transit accessibility, environmental protection, and

other objectives that enhance quality of life. As noted above, as part of the Urban Center application process, staff are at work on a consolidated Urban Center Plan that will include applicable elements of the various existing neighborhood plans.

- **A broad mix of land uses that foster both daytime and nighttime activities and opportunities for social interaction;**

Please refer to the land use map (attached), which shows the broad range of planned land uses in the proposed Urban Center. In the Central Business District of Greater Downtown and the area immediately to the east of the planned BRT station, mixed use designations predominate.

The Downtown Vision Statement in Moss Bay Plan, Chapter 3-A, also reinforces this concept. The existing mix of commercial, residential, and public space makes *“Downtown Kirkland... a vibrant, walkable community where many choose to live and work.”*

- **A range of affordable and healthy housing choices;**

A major focus of the Comprehensive Plan is the encouragement of housing production with a range of housing types. In many mixed-use districts throughout Downtown there are no limits on density other than building height and other development standards, meaning that compact multi-family units can more easily be developed. A major goal in the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that Kirkland has a sufficient quantity and variety of housing to meet projected growth and needs of the community. (Goal H-2)

Policies requiring affordable housing in areas with increased development capacity would help the proposed Urban Center meet this goal. (Policy H-3.2)

In addition, the City has adopted inclusionary zoning regulations, meaning that 10 percent of new housing units in developments of 4 or more units, in medium density, high density, commercial, and office zoning districts, must be designated as affordable units.

The existing land use policies would create a center with the ability to provide around 3,900 new residential units within proximity of jobs, services, and transit.

- **Historic preservation and adaptive reuse of historic places;**

Although the Greater Downtown Urban Center area has been subject to substantial redevelopment activity over the last few decades, the Comprehensive Plan includes policies to preserve and enhance Kirkland’s historic identity. (Goal CC-2)

In addition, Visual Landmarks Policy in the Moss Bay Plan, Chapter 3-C, resulted in a comprehensive inventory of historic resources in Downtown and the identification of incentives to encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

- **Parks and public open spaces that are accessible and beneficial to all residents in the Urban Center;**

The Greater Downtown Urban Center includes approximately 15 acres of park space, including two Lake-front parks (Marina Park and Heritage Park) and Peter Kirk Park. In addition, major developments Downtown have been required to include public plazas and pocket parks in order to enhance streetscapes in Downtown and provide a place for people to gather. The Parks and Open space policy in Moss Bay Chapter 3-D supports the well-connected system of park space in the Greater Downtown Urban Center.

- **Strategies to increase tree canopy within the Urban Center and incorporate low impact development measures to minimize storm water runoff;**

Strategies to increase tree canopy within the Urban Center include Comprehensive Plan polices to protect, enhance and restore trees and vegetation in the natural and built environment.

Strategies, objectives, and major policy documents include:

- Achievement of 40% tree canopy coverage City-wide
- Urban Forestry Strategic Plan
- Landscaping standards for the built environment
- Use of incentives, City practices and programs, and public education and outreach
- Collaboration with other overlapping jurisdictions

(Goal E-2, Policies E-2.1,2.2,2.3,2.4,2.5)

Low impact development measures that are required of development projects are consistent with citywide Comprehensive Plan polices. These policies promote the improved management of storm water runoff from impervious surfaces by employing low impact development practices through City projects, incentive programs, and development standards. (Policy E-1.15)

- **Facilities to meet human service needs;**

The Downtown area provides the City's highest concentration of human services facilities. Downtown is the location of the Kirkland Library, the Peter Kirk public pool, the Peter Kirk Community Center, Kirkland Senior Center, and the Kirkland Performing Arts Center.

The City of Kirkland supports the Kirkland Teen Union, located in Peter Kirk Park, to encourage and provide a safe and rewarding environment for youth in the community. (Policy HS-3.2)

The City of Kirkland also supports the Peter Kirk Senior Center, which provides a broad range of activities, classes and services for residents 50 years and older to engage and connect the residents with the larger community. (Policy HS-4.2)

The City also encourages human service organizations to make their services physically available to all and coordinates with these organizations to locate future facilities near commercial centers where transit and non-motorized facilities exist, such as within the proposed Urban Center. (Goal HS-6, Policy HS-6.2)

- **Superior urban design which reflects the local community vision for compact urban development;**

Specific design guidelines have been adopted that would apply to most of the proposed Urban Center. Applicable design guidelines include: “Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Oriented Business Districts,” “Design Guidelines for the Rose Hill Business District,” and “Kirkland Parkplace Mixed Use Development Master Plan and Design Guidelines.” These design guidelines promote superior urban design and pedestrian friendly development within the Urban Center. A robust Design Review process ensures that sound urban planning principles are incorporated into major development projects.

In addition to the design guidelines, the core area of the Central Business District is organized into several different “Urban Design Districts,” each with its own height allowances and special features. Each district has its own goals for design and architecture, pedestrian amenities, parking, and street amenities.

- **Pedestrian and bicycle mobility, transit use, and linkages between these modes;**

One key element of the vision for Downtown Kirkland is to “*enhance the open space network, and add pedestrian amenities.*” Transportation amenities within the Urban Center are designed to expand and improve walkability as well as connect commercial land use districts such as downtown and neighboring business districts. (Policy T-5.1, T-5.4)

Current multimodal amenities in and around the Greater Downtown Urban Center include the Cross Kirkland Corridor, with future regional connections along the East Side Rail Corridor, the existing Downtown Kirkland Transit Center, and Park Lane.

Policies to integrate transit facilities with pedestrian and bicycle networks ensure that future development within the center will provide linkages between transit, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. (Policies T-3.3)

Pedestrian circulation policies in the Moss Bay Plan, Chapter 3-E, call for the establishment and improvement of pedestrian pathways between existing activity centers, such as Downtown, the lakefront, and the Cross Kirkland Corridor.



A planned bus corridor between Downtown and the planned BRT station at the intersection of NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street and I-405 on Central Way will allow for a transit connection between the downtown core and Regional High Capacity Transit, across the proposed Urban Center.

- **Planning for complete streets to provide safe and inviting access to multiple travel modes, especially bicycle and pedestrian travel; and**

Policies for complete streets promote safe and inviting access to multimodal travel, especially bicycle and pedestrian access within the Urban Center. The City of Kirkland has made safety a primary goal for multimodal transportation planning. (Policy T-1.1, T- 2.1)

Pedestrian circulation policies in the Moss Bay Plan, Chapter 3-E, establish that pedestrian routes should have equal priority to motor vehicle routes in Downtown circulation.

- **Parking management and other strategies that minimize trips made by single occupant vehicles, especially during peak commute periods.**

Parking strategies that would apply to the Urban Center take an active approach to managing on-street and off-street parking. City wide goals include: *“Over the long term, increasing use of walking, biking and transit, along with changes in land use, will make differences in the amount of parking that is needed.”* (Policy T-4.4)

The City of Kirkland supports Transportation Demand Management for employers who fall under the requirements of Washington’s Commute Reduction law. The City works with employers to meet adopted goals for non-drive alone trips. (Policy T-3.4)

The City of Kirkland requires all new developments to establish appropriate Transportation Demand Management Plans. (Policy T-3.5)

The vehicular circulation policy in the Moss Bay Plan, Chapter 3-E, encourages the use of public transportation in Downtown to help reduce traffic congestion and parking problems in the core area.

- DP-33      Form the land use foundation for a regional high-capacity transit system through the designation of a system of Urban Centers. Urban Centers should receive high priority for the location of transit service.**

Sound Transit’s ST3 plan to build high capacity Bus Rapid Transit service within the proposed Urban Center will play an important role in connecting downtown Kirkland to other regional centers. In addition, the existing Kirkland Downtown Transit Center connects the center with other regional cores (e.g., Seattle, Downtown Bellevue, and Downtown Redmond) and reaches High Capacity Transit standards at peak times.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center must be adopted into the 2012 Countywide Planning Policies before the City can request that the proposed area be designated as an Urban Center by PSRC. PSRC will be accepting applications for new Urban Centers through the end of 2019, which creates a tight timeline. Therefore, the next steps are as follows:

1. September 3, 2019 – Adoption of consolidated Center Plan by Kirkland City Council
2. September 25, 2019 – Consideration of motion to approve Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center as an Urban Center in the Countywide Planning Policies
3. Fall 2019 – Approval of Urban Center by the King County Council
4. Fall 2019 – King County Council begins the ratification process
5. Fall 2019 – City of Kirkland submits Urban Center application to PSRC concurrent with King County ratification process.

## **Attachments:**

1. **Letter from Mayor**
2. **PSRC Criteria for Urban Growth Centers**
3. **Figure 1: Land Use**
4. **Figure 2: Walkability**
5. **Figure 3: Bike and Pedestrian Circulation**
6. **Figure 4: Transit Corridors and Facilities**



July 17, 2019

Puget Sound Regional Council  
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98104-1035

Re: Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center Nomination

Dear Growth Management Planning Council:

The City of Kirkland is pleased to nominate Greater Downtown Kirkland for designation as an Urban Center in the King County Countywide Planning Polices. The Kirkland City Council authorized this nomination with the adoption of the 2019-2021 Planning Work Program, based on policy language in the City's Comprehensive Plan that identifies Downtown – with its excellent (and improving) transit service – as an optimal place for continued employment and residential growth.

Designating the Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center as a regional Urban Center is consistent with:

- The criteria in the 2010 King County Countywide Planning Polices, Urban Centers Section;
- The City of Kirkland 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, which identifies the area in and around Downtown Kirkland as a candidate for Urban Center designation;
- Sound Transit's *2016 Sound Transit 3* Plan, which identifies the NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street/I-405 area as a planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station along the I-405 corridor, and would create nonmotorized connections between the station and adjoining neighborhoods and the Cross Kirkland Corridor; and
- The community's vision for the growth of Downtown Kirkland and surrounding areas.

Downtown Kirkland, which functions as the cultural and civic heart of the City, provides a strong sense of community for the residents of Kirkland. The Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center would represent an expansion of the already vibrant downtown core in that it would extend just beyond the planned BRT Station at NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street/I-405. In doing so, it will connect the City's Central Business District, Rose Hill Business District, Cross Kirkland Corridor, the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, and the planned BRT station to create a regional urban center.

The Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center is an area where the City plans to concentrate growth consistent with the housing and land use polices found in the Comprehensive Plan. The Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center is the home of three of the five largest employers located in the City of Kirkland, with a total workforce of over 17,000 employees. The City anticipates that the Urban Center will have approximately 13,000 residents and 26,800 employees by 2035. Coupled with this existing and planned growth, Greater Downtown Kirkland benefits from a traditional, walkable Downtown; excellent transit service; and a network of open space stretching along the shoreline of Lake Washington. These amenities reinforce Greater Downtown as an excellent place to accommodate regional growth while maintaining the high quality of life that Kirkland and the region are known for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Penny Sweet".

Mayor Penny Sweet



## **A. ELIGIBILITY FOR URBAN GROWTH CENTERS**

### **1. Local and Countywide Commitment:**

- a. The jurisdiction must demonstrate that the center is a local priority and that a commitment to making local investments to create a walkable, livable center has been in place.**

The City of Kirkland has invested over 30 years of planning into creating a walkable, vibrant, mixed use Downtown. As part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update, the area in and around downtown was identified as a candidate for nomination as an urban center.

- b. The center is identified as a candidate for a regional growth center designation in the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.**

As noted above, this designation is supported by Policy LU 5.5 in the City's Comprehensive Plan, adopted by City Council in 2015:

***Policy LU 5.5: Evaluate the potential of designating the area in and around Downtown Kirkland as an Urban Center.***

*The existing planned density for housing and planned intensity of employment in or near Downtown Kirkland may meet the requirements for an Urban Center designation. The primary advantage of an Urban Center designation would be opening up potential funding sources for Downtown infrastructure to support existing and planned growth. Essential to the evaluation would be ensuring that such designation is consistent with existing plans for Downtown Kirkland.*

- c. The center is identified as a candidate for a regional growth center designation in the applicable countywide planning policies.**

As part of its application to designate Greater Downtown as an Urban Center, the City of Kirkland is requesting that the Urban Center be incorporated into the Countywide Planning Policies.

- d. The jurisdiction has adopted an ordinance or resolution that requests PSRC designate the center as a regional growth center and authorizes its staff to submit a completed application.**

The City of Kirkland is currently in the process of drafting and adopting a resolution to request that PSRC designate the proposed center as a regional growth center. Through adoption of the 2019-21 Planning Work Program, the City Council has authorized staff to bring forward the Urban Center application.

- 2. Planning: A jurisdiction must have completed a center plan (subarea plan, plan element or functional equivalent that provides detailed planning or analysis) that meets the guidance included in the growth center plan checklist in the PSRC's Plan Review Manual prior to applying. In addition to the items outlined in the checklist, the plan should include an environmental review that demonstrates the center area is appropriate for dense development and should provide an assessment of housing need, including displacement risk, as well as documentation of tools, programs, or commitment to provide housing choices affordable to a full range of comes and strategies to future far housing.**

As part of the Urban Center application process, staff are at work on a consolidated Urban Center Plan that will include applicable elements of the various neighborhood plans that make up the center. These policies promote walkability, transit accessiblity, environmental protection, and other objectives that enhance quality of life. The independent neighborhood plans that comprise the proposed Urban Center have been subject to independent environmental review. In addition, the City's adopted Housing Strategy Plan assesses housing need, displacement, and affordable housing strategies City-wide, including within the proposed Urban Center.

- 3. Jurisdiction and Location: new regional growth centers should be located within a city, with few exceptions. Link light rail stations in unincorporated urban areas may be eligible for center designation, provided they are affiliated for annexation or planning for incorporation. join planning of unincorporated center areas is also encouraged.**

The proposed urban center is located entirely within the City of Kirkland.

**4. Existing Conditions: the jurisdiction must demonstrate the follow conditions of the proposed center exist at the time of the application:**

**a. The existing infrastructure and utilities can support additional growth in the center**

The existing infrastructures and utilities within the Urban Center are sufficient to accommodate additional growth, consistent with functional utility plans adopted by the City. Applicable polices are in place to ensure infrastructure improvements can accommodate future development.

**b. The center includes a mix of both existing housing and employment**

The proposed center includes a variety of housing and employment opportunities. The proposed center currently has over 6,700 residents and over 17,000 jobs and is home to three of the top five employers in Kirkland, including the City of Kirkland and Google.

**c. Justification of center boundaries. The boundary of the center should be generally round or square shape and avoid linear or gerrymandered shapes that are not readily walkable or connected by transit**

The boundaries of the proposed Urban Center include the Moss Bay Neighborhood, including the existing Central Business District, nearby areas with existing or planned higher-density commercial and residential uses, and the area surrounding the I-405/NE 85th Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station. The area is connected by existing and frequent transit and is easily walkable. A map of the boundary as well as existing and planned transit routes is attached.

**d. The center has bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, amenities, and a street pattern that supports walkability.**

Greater Downtown Kirkland is an area that includes a small-scale, walkable street grid; a historic, pedestrian-oriented commercial district; excellent bike infrastructure; and easy access to parks adjacent to Lake Washington. A map of existing walkability and bike routes is attached.



## B. CRITERIA FOR URBAN GROWTH CENTERS

1. **Compatibility with Vision 2040:** The jurisdiction's vision for the proposed regional growth center must reinforce the centers concept within the VISION 2040 regional growth strategy and multicounty planning policies.

VISION 2040 sets an overarching goal of focusing growth in urban areas to create walkable, compact, transit-oriented communities that maintain local character. Existing planning policies have made downtown Kirkland a vibrant, walkable community where many choose to live and work.

The vision for the Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center is to connect the already vibrant downtown with planned high capacity transit along the I-405 corridor and other major employment centers in the vicinity, including the Rose Hill Business District, and the 6th Street Corridor. The center will be a well-connected, compact, transit-oriented community well-placed to absorb regional growth.

2. **Activity Levels:**

- a. **The center's existing density must be at least 18 activity units per acre.**

The proposed Urban Center currently has 6,745 residents and 17,059 employees, with an average density of 45.9 activity units per acre.

|   | Existing | 2035 Planned |
|---|----------|--------------|
| <b>Buildable Area (Acres)</b>             | 519      |              |
| <b>Population</b>                         | 6,745    | 13,006       |
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| <b>Population and Employment</b>          | 23,804   | 39,806       |
| <b>Population and Employment per Acre</b> | 45.9     | 76.7         |

Table 1. Existing and planned densities for proposed center



**b. The center's planned target density must be at least 45 activity units per acre**

According to the City's Comprehensive Plan 2035 capacity analysis, the proposed Urban Center will approximately double in population and add over 9,000 new employees for an average density of 76.7 activity units per acre.

**c. The center must have sufficient zoned development capacity to adequately accommodate targeted levels of growth.**

The center is adequately zoned to accommodate targeted growth levels. The proposed center is zoned almost exclusively for commercial or multifamily uses. In many mixed-use districts throughout Downtown there are no limits on density other than building height and other development standards, meaning that compact multi-family units can more easily be developed.

**d. A goal should be in place for the center to have at least a mix of at least 15% planned residential and employment activity in the center.**

Planned growth for the center has a mix of one residents for every two jobs created.

**3. Size: The center must be at least 200 acres and no more than 640 acres, unless the center is served by an internal, high capacity transit system, in which case, it may be larger.**

The proposed Greater Downtown Kirkland Urban Center is 519 acres.

**4. Transit: The center must have existing or planned fixed route bus, regional bus, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), or other frequent and all-day bus service. Frequent service is defined as service that operates all-day (operates at least 16 hours per day on weekdays) and has headways less than 15-minutes.**

The center includes one existing transit center, the Kirkland Downtown Transit Center which, in collaboration with King County and Sound transit, will support High Capacity Transit as of March 2020 with the adoption of the North Eastside Mobility Project. The center includes one planned BRT station at the intersection of I-405 and NE 85th Street, as part of the Sound Transit 3 package of transportation improvements. This station, scheduled for completion in 2024, will improve connection between the urban center and the region.

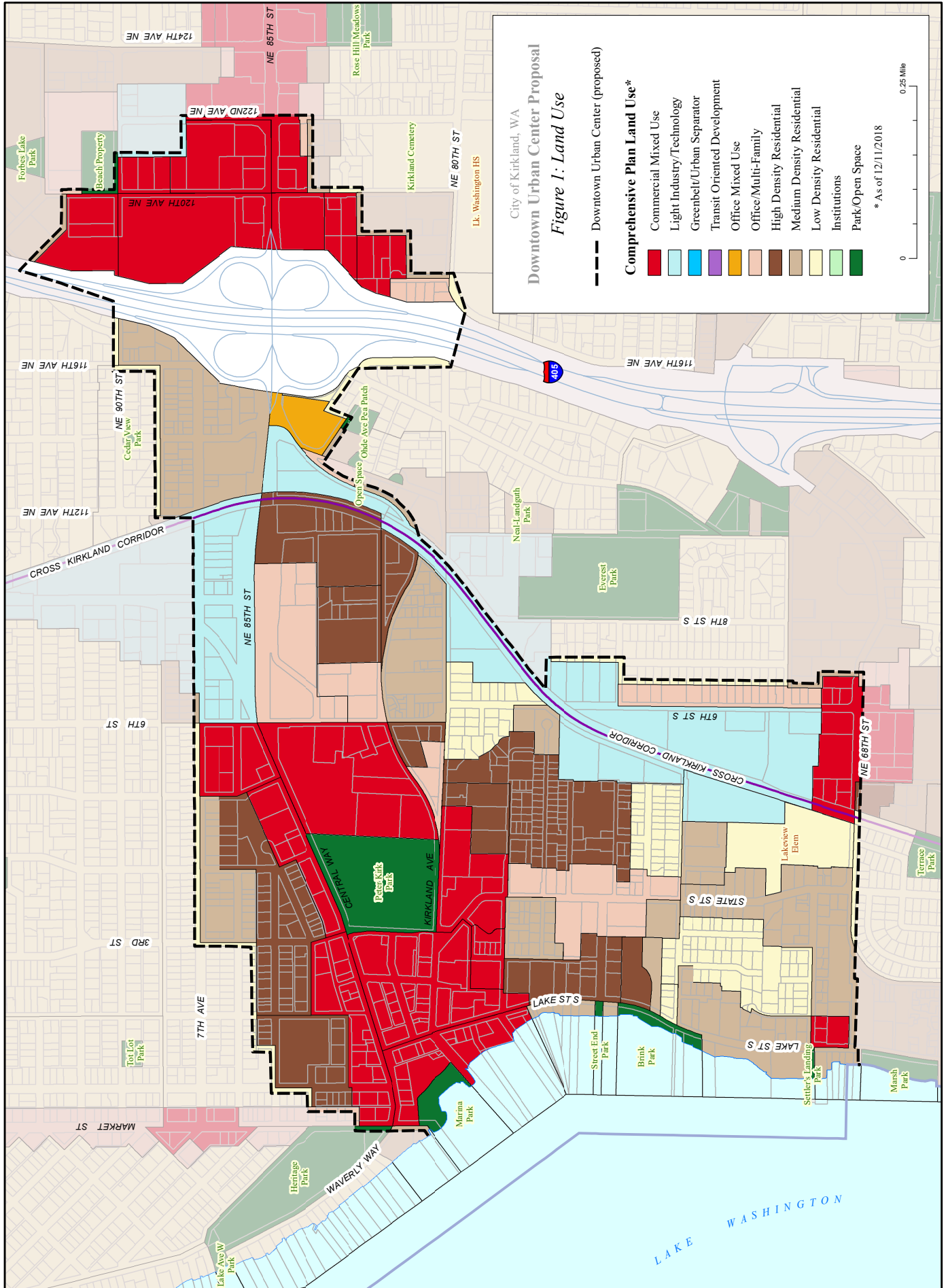
Under existing conditions, adequate pedestrian and bus connections exist between the planned BRT Station and the Downtown Transit Center. However, connectivity will be further enhanced with ongoing collaboration between City staff and King County Metro to improve bus service on Central Way (the main link between the BRT Station and the traditional Downtown).

**5. Market Potential: There must be evidence of future market potential to support planning target.**

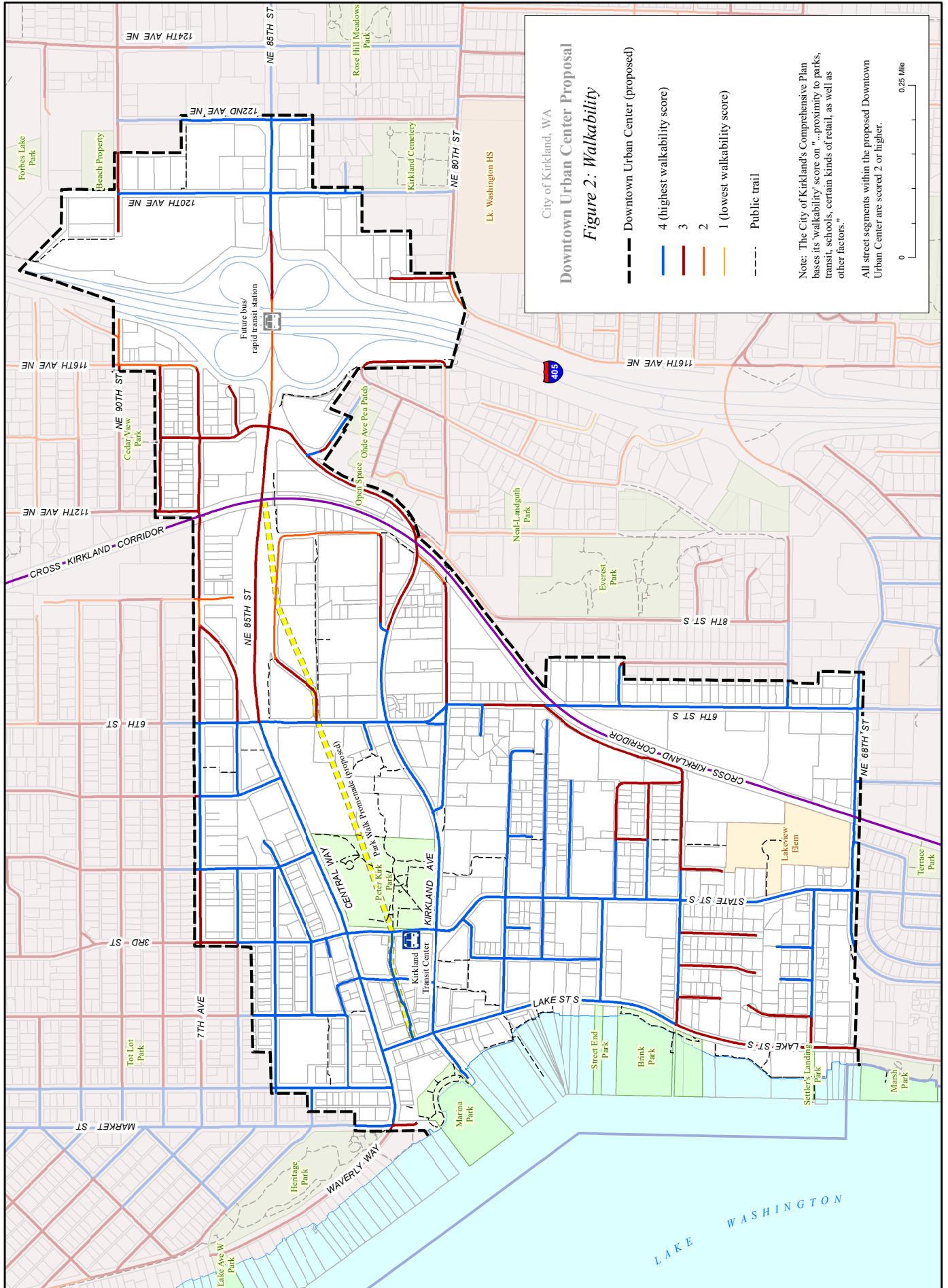
Data has shown robust market potential within the center. Greater Downtown Kirkland is current experiencing significant growth, with an estimated 1,723 market-rate residential units, an additional 126 affordable housing units and nearly 900,000 square feet of commercial space in the planning pipeline. City staff are currently in the process of conducting a market analysis of the urban center.

**6. Regional Role: There must be evidence that the center will play a clear regional role by serving as an important destination for the county and the jurisdiction must be planning to accommodate significant residential and employment growth under the regional growth strategy.**

Greater Downtown Kirkland already contains many major regional employers and functions as a regional destination for residents and visitors alike. As noted above, the center is already planned for significant growth. Designation as an Urban Center would help the City increase connectivity between downtown Kirkland and other major regional employment and residential nodes.







124TH AVE NE  
122ND AVE NE  
120TH AVE NE  
116TH AVE NE  
112TH AVE NE  
6TH ST  
3RD ST  
MARKET ST  
NE 65TH ST  
NE 68TH ST  
NE 70TH ST  
NE 72ND ST  
NE 74TH ST  
NE 76TH ST  
NE 78TH ST  
NE 80TH ST  
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NE 122ND ST  
NE 124TH ST

Forbes Lake Park  
Beech Property  
Cedar View Park  
Open Space  
Peter Kirk Park  
Marina Park  
Heritage Park  
Lake Ave W Park  
Street End Park  
Brink Park  
Settler's Landing Park  
Marsh Park  
Terrence Park  
Lakerew Elem  
Everest Park  
New Langdon Park  
Kirkland Cemetery  
Rose Hill Meadows Park

CROSS - KIRKLAND - CORRIDOR  
KIRKLAND AVE  
WAVERLY WAY  
LAKE ST S  
STATE ST S  
6TH ST S  
7TH ST S  
8TH ST S  
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97TH ST S  
98TH ST S  
99TH ST S  
100TH ST S

Future bus/rapid transit station  
Lk. Washington HS  
Kirkland Transit Center

405

LAKE WASHINGTON



