

City of Kirkland Planning and Community Development Department

September 2013

What are community vision statements and why are they important?

One of the first steps in the update of the Kirkland Comprehensive Plan will be to conduct a citywide Community Visioning process in the fall of 2013. The visioning process will be designed as part of the overarching community outreach program [Kirkland 2035 Your Voice. Your Vision. Your Future.](#) Last updated in 2002, Kirkland's existing [Vision Statement](#) needs to be evaluated to see if it still reflects the values and priorities for how we want the city to develop 20 years from now or if not, what needs to be changed. In preparation for evaluating Kirkland's Vision Statement this document is intended to provide an overview of what a vision statement is, their purpose, what they typically contain and internet resources for more information about vision statements and examples from other cities.

What is the purpose of a vision statement?

A vision statement describes a community's values and aspirations and a shared image of what they want their community to become over the next 10 to 20 years in the future. The statement should address all aspects that make up a community such as the social, cultural and economic fabric. Statements should be forward thinking and written in a positive, affirmative and inspirational style. The vision statement functions like a captain steers a ship to stay the course on its journey as changes occur.

Kirkland's Vision Statement and Framework Goals

In the case of Kirkland, the [Vision Statement](#) was used to establish the priorities that form the city wide [Framework Goals](#) found in Chapter Two of the Comprehensive Plan. In 2002, as part of the *Community Conversations – Kirkland 2022* public outreach program, approximately 1,000 people participated in a process to create the existing vision statement for the 20 year horizon year of 2022.

Once the Vision Statement was created, the 17 Framework Goals were established to set the priorities for guiding growth and development in Kirkland. From this foundation the general plan chapters evolved (i.e. land use, transportation, etc.). The general plan chapters provide more detailed goals and policies to implement the vision and framework goals. Zoning Code and other regulations are then developed to be consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan. A few of the recent neighborhood plans also contain their own vision statements unique to the neighborhood.

Since the last time the Vision Statement was created the City has changed through growth and the annexation of 31,000 new residents. Therefore, it is a high priority to conduct an extensive community outreach program for people to be involved in setting the priorities for the next twenty years.



Below are subjects that are usually discussed in community vision statements:

- The **common values** of a community
- The **qualities or resources** that make a city unique or describe its identity
- The attributes people like and **want to be sure to keep or want to change** about their city
- The **historic context** of a city
- The **preferred future for each subject area** of the city such as the transportation system, natural environment, parks, open space and tree canopy
- A **description of commercial and residential areas**
- **Transition issues** between uses (i.e. landscape buffers, architectural mitigation, traffic management)

Many believe that the existing Vision Statement has served us well over the last 11 years and may only need minor adjustments. As part of the Kirkland 2035 Community Visioning process the City will consider the following questions about the existing vision statement:

- How has our community changed since the last vision statement was last updated?
- What are the future trends or additional ideas that are not reflected in the statement should be considered?
- The existing Vision Statement is two pages long. Is there a way to shorten the statement and still reflect the community's vision?

Completing the vision statement

The Comprehensive Plan Update Community Outreach Plan and work program describes the schedule, techniques and focus groups for the visioning process. Following the community outreach process, staff will compile the public comments and input and prepare a draft vision statement. The draft will be available to the public for review and comment. The Planning Commission may consider changes to the statement throughout the Plan update process.

For more information and other resources on community visioning see:

Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington at www.mrsc.org - see [Creating a Community Vision](#)

Washington State Department of Commerce at www.commerce.wa.gov/publications for document [Shaping Washington Growth Management Future- Citizen Participation and Community Visioning Guide](#).

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions at www.anjec.org for document [Smart Growth Survival Kit Essential Elements of the Vision](#)



EXAMPLES OF VISION STATEMENTS FROM KIRKLAND AND OTHER COMMUNITIES

Vision statements come in all different formats. The following are examples of a vision statement for the Market Neighborhood and excerpts of vision statements from other communities. Website links to the full statement are provided below.

Kirkland Market Neighborhood Vision Statement

The last update of the Market Neighborhood Plan in the Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2007 after an extensive public participation process. Below is an excerpt from the [Market Neighborhood Plan](#) vision statement as an example of a neighborhood vision statement.

"The historic Market Neighborhood is a friendly, walkable neighborhood along the shores of Lake Washington that is close to downtown Kirkland. Its residents enjoy their proximity to the lake through public view corridors and viewing stations, as well as the park system. Waverly Way near the western boundary of the neighborhood has both pedestrian and bicycle routes which provide beautiful unobstructed views of the lake. The tree canopy in the neighborhood has been maintained and enhanced and it adds to the neighborhood's natural setting with mature trees and wildlife habitat. The neighborhood's five parks are within walking distance and offer both active and passive recreation for residents. Juanita Bay Park also provides an opportunity for people from the neighborhood, and from the broader community, to observe and enjoy wildlife habitat and open space.... See the link above for the entire vision statement.

City of Tallahassee, Florida:

"When we think about the community that we want to become, we see a waterfront community with the following features:

- *A cleaner, more beautiful community that embraces and enhances its waterfronts*
- *A community that has maintained its heritage as a fishing and tourism center while adopting the newest technologies and strategies*
- *A community in which new development or redevelopment is compatible with the historic look of the community and protective of the natural environment*
- *A community that has maintained its tree canopy*
- *A community that provides family wage jobs*
- *A community that has recreational opportunities, medical services and shopping opportunities*
- *A community with an active civic life of fraternal organizations, social clubs and religious institutions*
- *A community of outstanding schools*

<http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/DCP/waterfronts/Meetings/TallahasseePMMeeting/WritingYourCommVision.pdf>



Sample Mission Statement to carry out the vision statement: ("Guiding Principles")

"In seeking the vision, the community will employ the following guiding principles:

- Protection of its culture, history, environment and natural resources.*
- Adoption of new technologies and leadership in the use of best management practices to benefit the whole community while not exceeding the carrying capacity of the environment.*
- Ensuring the local residents benefit from future growth and development."*

City of Loveland Colorado:

Here's an example of using a tagline and simple short vision statement that includes many of the key topics that should be included in a vision statement:

"Loveland a vibrant community surrounded by natural beauty where you belong"

"Loveland is a community:

- That is characterized by welcoming neighborhoods and a sense of individual belonging;*
- That embraces the heritage and natural beauty of the region and values its strategic location;*
- That is well planned and environmentally sensitive, where all citizens are safe and secure and have equal access to services and amenities, including plentiful recreational and cultural activities;*
- With an integrated system of technology, utility and transportation networks that support a vital economy and coordinates with regional plans;*
- That is continuously developing partnership of citizens, business and educational communities, with a stable and diverse economic base;*
- That offers ample employment and business opportunities to all;*
- That encourages active public involvement and is responsive to the needs of its citizens."*

www.ci.loveland.co.us

City of Bellevue:

The vision statement for Bellevue includes 14 focused ideas and then goes on to explain and expand upon the ideas presented in the statements.

Bellevue is one of the outstanding cities in the United States. It is:

- A "City in a Park"*
- A dedicated steward of environmental quality*
- Where key natural features are preserved and restored*



“Community Vision Statements”

- *A model of superior urban design and “people places”*
- *A community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods*
- *A city that meets the housing needs of all citizens*
- *A regional economic center with a strong and diverse economy*
- *A city with a great Downtown-viable, livable, and memorable*
- *The Eastside’s transportation hub, offering an array of mobility choices,*
- *The center of arts and culture for the Eastside,*
- *A community that cares for people and families in need,*
- *A safe and secure community,*
- *A city served by outstanding facilities and services,*
- *A leader in meeting regional challenges,*
- *An active and engaged community.*

http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/pdf/PCD/CompPlan_Vol_1_01.Introduction.pdf (pg. 20-26)

City of Bellingham:

The vision statement for Bellingham includes 9 areas of focus. It then takes each of these categories and gives a list of small goals that fall under each category. The categories are: Development Patterns and Community Character, Transportation, Economic Vitality and Employment, Housing, Schools, Education and Cultural Resources, Community Health, Welfare and Safety, Downtown and Waterfront, Environment and Natural Resources, and Parks and Recreation.

<http://www.cob.org/documents/planning/comprehensive-plan/2006-chapter1.pdf> (F1-F10)

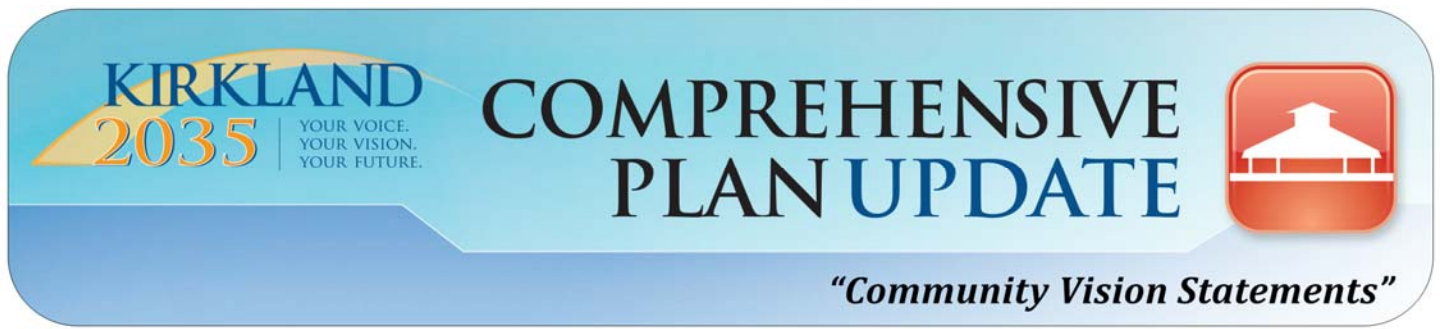
City of Federal Way:

The vision statement for Federal Way gives a brief explanation of what the vision for the City aspires to be. It then goes on to give more specific characteristics that the City hopes to promote and grow. These characteristics are: Government For and By the People, Responsible Growth, Economic Vitality, Efficient Traffic System, Safety, Infrastructure, and Utilities, Caring for Our Own, Quality, Culture, Environment, and Play, and Regional Player.

<http://www.cityoffederalway.com/DocumentCenter/View/3678> (1-8 - 1-11)

City of Mill Creek:

The vision statement for Mill Creek gives an explanation of the vision statements that it has had in the past and large changes that their vision has faced. It then has a list of visions for varying issues that the city faces that are then expanded upon. The categories in this list are: City Image, Housing, Environmental Protection, Residential



Development, Commercial and Industrial Development, Mixed-Use Development, Town Center, East Gateway Urban Village, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Transit, Economic Development, Capital Facilities and Municipal Finance, Intergovernmental Coordination, Property Rights, Municipal Urban Growth Area.

<http://www.cityofmillcreek.com/DocumentCenter/View/64> (IV-1 - IV-8)

City of Seattle:

The vision statement for Seattle give a history of the comprehensive plan and then lists 4 core values that guide the vision statement and comprehensive plan. It then goes on to expand on those values and an overview of how the city will reach these goals. These four values are: Community, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity and Security, and Social Equity.

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cms/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/dpdd016645.pdf (V-VII)

City of Tacoma:

The vision statement for Tacoma explains what the Comprehensive Plan is attempting to achieve then outlines 21 topics that explain what the city of Tacoma hopes to achieve as their city grows. These are divided into small one or two sentence statements.

<http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/Comprehensive%20Plan/1%20-%20Introduction%206-14-11.pdf> (Intro-2 – Intro-3)