



Jay Arnold Urbanist Questionnaire 2025

Kirkland City Council, Position 1

What are your top three priorities to achieve in your term?

1. Successfully implement the Kirkland 2044 comprehensive plan vision, realizing the development opportunities in our bus rapid transit station area, enabling mixed-use neighborhood centers, and optimizing middle housing in residential neighborhoods. 2. Plan for the investments in transit, rolling and walking infrastructure. We need transit that works for Kirkland. We need to accelerate our sidewalk completion programs and create a network of protected bike lanes throughout the city, and build a paved trail and separated walking path on the Cross Kirkland Corridor. 3. Protect our values as a safe, welcoming, sustainable community, given federal chaos in funding and opposition to work on equity, inclusion, and climate. We are researching our community's exposure to federal funding and developing response plans. The City Council has recommitted to our diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging work and will update our DEIB roadmap next year.

How will you boost housing options, particularly for families of all incomes to live where they work? How will you engage the public for new shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing, permanent supportive housing? How do you weigh community objections with the housing goals for your jurisdiction, while encouraging engagement from neighbors?

In addition to our regional centers of Totem Lake and Downtown and opportunities for jobs and housing in our Bus Rapid Transit station area, our efforts to boost housing need to be at various scales of development and levels of income.



We need to enable redevelopment of our neighborhood centers from car-oriented strip malls to vibrant, mixed-use hubs. The alternative is not small-scale development or status quo but a risk of loss of neighborhood grocery stores and an increase in vacant spaces. In addition to required affordable housing units, we need to incentivize smaller housing types (not just allow them). I will listen to concerns and look for solutions to address while still meeting housing affordability targets.

Instead of re-litigating the location of Permanent Supportive Housing, we must focus on ensuring it is successful when it opens. With 65% of residents coming from local referrals, we can move people from safe parking, tent city, or temporary RV locations in Kirkland into homes.

Kirkland is currently developing a Homelessness Action Plan. At town hall events earlier this year, there was not broad understanding about our current homelessness response, though broad support for prevention efforts. We need to continue conversations about the entire continuum of care and additional work needed. We need to partner with community organizations to scale up solutions. Highlighting existing examples help; local churches have been doing work on homelessness for years.

Do you support adding progressive revenue sources? Which ones would you support to fund your priorities? Or what cuts would you make to balance budgets facing increasing strain under Trump?

I support progressive revenue, especially when it helps create economic incentives around the policies it funds. While Kirkland has supported legislation for real estate taxes to support affordable housing, I would like to see it be progressive so that the largest, most expensive homes contribute more (vs. applying to all housing). The city uses revenue from vehicle license fees to support our walking and biking



infrastructure; our authority is limited to a regressive, flat fee. Ideally, that would be tied to the value of cars, but would also require state legislation to do so.

Other progressive revenue that the state collects, like the capital gains tax, should be shared with local government.

What do you think is the most important strategy your jurisdiction can pursue to limit cost increases and make the region affordable to live in? How would you go about implementing that strategy?

To make the region more affordable, we must allow for people to have abundant housing choices at all price points.

Beyond that, we are seeing major cost increases forecasted in county services: garbage / recycling / compost, wastewater and storm water, and drinking water. While we do have to recognize the need to make investments to address aging infrastructure and protect the environment, each of these decisions are being made independently with potential double-digit percentage increases.

We need to break down silos and look at the overall impact on affordability. (Kirkland suggested a regional summit of county and cities to discuss.) We need to examine the assumptions around the need for new facilities, focus on cost drivers, and consider opportunities to invest in stages. For customers paying for those utilities, we need to provide options where they have cost control such as smaller garbage collection or water consumption. We need to continue to revise the "Kirkland Cares" program that offers low-income discounts across all city services, including for reimbursement for services built into rent.



At the city, we need to look for opportunities to partner and build infrastructure that serves multiple needs and solves multiple problems. (An example is 132nd Square Park, which included park improvements and added stormwater capacity.) I'm also intrigued by ideas from the "abundance" movement on how we can do more, faster.

Traffic deaths are rising across Washington state, with pedestrians composing an increasing share statewide. What is your approach to making our streets safer for all users?

I'm committed to Vision Zero and the Safe System Approach that recognizes that people make mistakes and safety requires a multilayered approach. Within the city, we are identifying high-risk areas and performing a citywide speed limit study that will allow us to lower speed limits. Informed by our Transportation Strategic Plan and this work, I want to re-prioritize the city's capital improvement program, look for opportunities to improve designs and slow speeds, and accelerate efforts to address gaps in our sidewalk and bicycling infrastructure. Many local projects are funded by regional grants. At the Puget Sound Regional Council, the next version of the Regional Transportation Plan needs to add requirements for safety and proven countermeasures for funded projects. (Similar changes to prioritization and scoring need to happen for climate impacts of funded transportation projects.)

What is your approach to improving public safety over the next five years? How will you actualize it?

We improve public safety by being smart and strategic about our emergency response, and looking at opportunities for prevention. Kirkland has led with deploying Crisis Responders for behavioral health-related 911 calls. We have expanded capacity through creating the Regional Crisis Response (RCR) agency with Bothell, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline, which now provides 16 hour a



day, 7-day a week coverage. I want to find opportunities to expand this program for full coverage. In addition to having mental health professionals best suited to respond to people in crisis, RCR frees up staffing for police officers that otherwise would be responding to these time-consuming calls. Kirkland also is the site of the first Crisis Care Center in King County, providing mental health urgent care and stabilization for those in crisis. This is a no-wrong-door drop in clinic, which we need to continue to educate the community about as an option vs. the emergency room. The city is engaged in regional efforts to better respond to property crime and organized retail theft in partnership with retailers. Other high profile incidents in Kirkland saw suspects eventually brought to justice with patient, thorough detective work. Later this year, the City Council will kick off a strategic review of our criminal justice system. Next year, we're examining prosecution and defense work and caseloads. I want to consider bringing the contracted city prosecutor in-house to improve service.

The Eastside faces unique challenges when it comes to affordability, transit connectivity, and suburban versus city identity. What are your thoughts on how we can envision the future of urbanism on the Eastside?

The things that people love about our community are the essential elements of urbanism: people-centered, gathering places that are near to where we live and connections to other places in the city or within the region. We build community at our nearby park, favorite neighborhood restaurant or coffee shop. We appreciate the chance to walk or bike on the Cross Kirkland Corridor which connects most neighborhoods and many places. With light rail on the Eastside and upcoming Bus Rapid Transit, and frequent local connections, transit becomes an opportunity for more and more choices. Transit service is an important aspect of our growth plans. Some parts of Kirkland are not well-served by transit nor connected to the CKC. Kirkland will be developing its Transit Strategy next year, envisioning the service we



need, identifying gaps, and developing options to fill through Metro or partnering with others. For both Metro and Sound Transit, we need to have a broader community conversation about potential expansion or acceleration of planned transit given uncertainty about federal funding. While people are excited about light rail connecting Redmond and Bellevue to Seattle, they are deflated to learn that service in Kirkland is not scheduled until 2044. Expansion at the scale and speed we need will likely require a multiyear grassroots advocacy effort. Previous successes on climate-related legislation and policy provide a potential model for action.

Do you support camping bans or sweeps? If elected, how would you adapt or change current law/policies to protect and support our neighbors?

Sweeps and bans are not a solution. We must provide alternatives to people living outside. Kirkland's Homeless Action Response Team (HART) responds to issues of people living outside. They build rapport and trust and help link people with available resources and services. Kirkland was able to help people living in a set of RVs parked on city streets by finding better locations (some on city property, some in partnership with the faith-based community) or finding other housing options. While people want action in hours or days, successful solutions can take days and weeks to find appropriate housing or shelter. We need to be ahead of the complaints and proactive in finding solutions.

I will be guided by what I learn during the development of Kirkland's Homelessness Action Plan this year on any law or policy changes needed to help solve the problem.

In what ways could your city's comprehensive plan go further, and what would you push for to improve it during your tenure?



Kirkland's 2044 comprehensive plan focuses growth downtown and Totem Lake, envisions mixed-use hubs in neighborhood centers, and provides flexibility for middle housing in residential neighborhoods. I believe it is the right strategy and plan for Kirkland's future.

The Planning Commission also looked at other options for areas that are served by frequent transit. Unfortunately, some disinformation exaggerated the concept as 4-6 story buildings along every bus line, which was never anyone's intention. To clarify, the Planning Commission attempted to develop a policy that would specify how we would study opportunities along these transit corridors. The details on what and would not be studied and limits on changes that would be considered became too complex and unwieldy. The Commission did not recommend the policy to Council and it was not included in our comprehensive plan. I support this decision.

For any future plans, I would like to take a step back. Kirkland's middle housing work was informed by Housing Strategy Advisory Group convened in 2017. Their report identified a number of challenges and provided ideas and options to address. This provided a way to discuss issues in a more general way without talking about specific policy changes or locations. I want to update Kirkland's Housing Strategy with a similar process to inform the next updates of the comprehensive plan 5 and 10 years from now.