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Case Study

## Creating Compact and Complete Communities: Seven Propositions for Success

by Gary Pivo

Contemporary planning practice often finds planners seeking to increase the density and balance of land uses in their communities in order to create a more compact and complete urban form. However, little is known about how to go about this process. This case study of Kirkland, Washington, examines a suburban city that was transformed into one of the most compact and complete communities in the Pacific Northwest. The case study generates seven propositions that may help other communities achieve a similar outcome. They include having a vision of a place where people want to be, embracing professional management, maintaining a collaborative city council, investing in access and amenities, adopting regulations that are both permissive and protective, protecting most areas from change while compensating those that are affected, and providing developers the resources they need to succeed.

### BACKGROUND

Compact and complete community development are central tenets of smart growth and New Urbanism. For example, the first two Ahwahnee Principles, which were developed in 1991 under the sponsorship of the California Local Government Commission as a means of synthesizing new planning ideas, are: (1) "all planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities including housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents" and (2) "community size should be designed so that housing, jobs, daily needs, and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other."

The objective is to use less land and reduce the separation of land uses in order to achieve a variety of values including open space protection, community vitality, affordable housing, air quality, transit use, and more walkable places. But how might a community achieve such a vision? That is the subject of this case study.

Prior studies have provided few clues for planners. Hardwick (1994) found that an interactive consultative process contributed to the successful implementation of two pedestrian oriented neighborhoods in Vancouver, B.C. Atash (1993) observed that pedestrian and transit-oriented land use depends on metro-scale land-use and transportation plans. And Pivo (1993) found that transit-oriented suburban centers flourish in certain types of locations. But in general, there is little known about what it takes for a place to make the transition to being a more compact and complete community.

Fortunately some cities have gone through the process and case studies of those areas could provide useful answers. In another study, Pivo (1996) identified the most compact and complete communities in "Cascadia," which includes Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. All the cities and census designated places in the region were measured according to a compact and complete community index built from four criteria: job density, housing density, jobs-housing balance, and retail-housing balance. The most compact and complete communities were then evaluated using another set of criteria. For example, as planners might expect, the 25 most compact and complete communities had a higher percentage of residents who rode the bus to work, a smaller percentage who drove alone to work and a much higher percentage of residents who worked in the city where they lived.

Once it was discovered that some communities are more compact and complete and do indeed perform as desired, the next logical question is: How did they get that way? Is there something in their planning history that others could use to move their communities in a similar direction? That is the question that motivated this study.

Kirkland, Washington, was selected for this case study because it was both the most compact and complete suburb in Washington State and because it has made considerable progress toward this status since the 1960s. Kirkland places in the highest decile among Washington's cities and census designated places for housing density, jobs density, jobs-housing balance, and retail-housing balance. It also posted impressive gains along each of

these parameters (Pivo 1995). It is the best example in the state, and probably one of the best examples in the country, of a place that's been transformed from an auto-dependent bedroom suburb to a less auto-oriented compact and complete community.

Kirkland is located on the eastern shore of Lake Washington, immediately east of Seattle (see Figure 1). It was founded in 1886 by Peter Kirk as the home for his short-lived Moss Bay Iron and Steel Works. Instead of steel, the town became a wool milling and ship building center. Kirkland was incorporated in 1905. Its ferry terminal made it a transportation center for goods and commuters heading from the "east side" to central Seattle. That role came to an end after 1940 when the first bridge was built across the lake.



▣ *Figure 1*  
Kirkland Map



▣ *Figure 2*  
Looking east from the  
Ferry Dock, circa 1920s

Courtesy Kirkland Heritage  
Society

Detailed study of the Kirkland case uncovered a series of strategies and events that appear to have been critical to its transformation. They are reported below as Seven Propositions for Success. If these propositions were to hold in other cases, they could constitute a set of planning principles for the implementation of more compact and complete urban form. The reader should be cautioned, however. Case studies can be used to generalize to a theory, but until the theory is proven to be applicable in most situations, it cannot be assumed to work in other settings. With case studies, the responsibility for generalizing to other cases falls on the reader. Like courtroom judges, readers must decide for themselves whether a prior case is an appropriate precedent for their particular situation.

The case study process consisted of intensive interviewing and analysis of historical secondary sources including newspaper articles, planning documents, and statistical reports from the U.S. Census, the city, and the regional council of governments. Individuals to be interviewed were selected for their relevance during the time period studied and included current or former elected officials, city staff, citizen activists, journalists, business leaders, and developers. The interviews were semi-structured and guided by a list of interview questions prepared in advance for each individual. However, many of the questions were open-ended, which allowed the conversation to follow a natural path. Tape recordings were made and transcribed. All of the collected data, including research notes, published articles, documents and interview transcripts were coded and analyzed using qualitative data analysis software.

In 1990, the state of Washington adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA), which mandated regional and local comprehensive planning. Although it is not an explicit statutory goal, many plans adopted under the GMA promote a more compact and complete urban form because it furthers several of the 13 goals in the GMA including multimodal transportation, less sprawl, efficient public facilities and services, a variety of residential densities, and the retention of open space. Notwithstanding this statewide mandate, Kirkland was making progress toward these goals long before growth management became state policy. What explains its dramatic success? That is the subject of this story.

## THE FACTS OF THE CASE

### Proposition 1: Visualize and Value Places Where People Want to Be

To increase population density and jobs for local residents, a community must attract new households and businesses. That is facilitated by becoming a more desirable destination. For a long time, leaders wanted to make Kirkland "a place where people want to be." In fact that became the city's motto in the mid-90s, though the sentiment was there for many years before. In 1971, for example, the city manager told a reporter that the city's primary goal was to be "an enjoyable place to live" (Buckley 1971).

To help clarify their vision, Kirkland's leaders sought out other cities and neighborhoods they could emulate. They talked frequently about places like Sausalito and Carmel in California and Granville Island in Vancouver, B.C. These were places that they viewed as having the human scale, charm, and vitality they wanted for Kirkland. And having real examples to point to made their own vision seem plausible.

There were two principal elements to the Kirkland vision that emerged in the early 60s. The first was to have a successful, accessible, public waterfront. As one former city official said:

I honestly think it started from a vision. ... City councils 30 years ago started acquiring land for parks and public access to the waterfront. That was before Kirkland was popular. That was a vision. ... There were people who saw some things before this was the place to be.

Ideas about the waterfront date back to at least the late 1950s. According to the city's 1963 Comprehensive Plan, a Waterfront Coordinating Committee was formed in 1959 representing all interested groups in the city. It produced the 1960 Waterfront Plan, which included the parks, plazas, boardwalks and boat facilities found there today.

The second element of Kirkland's early vision was to have a human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented downtown shopping district. This strategy was central to what one former planning director, speaking in 1975, called Kirkland's "cautious approach to growth" (Sanger 1975). As the city manager at the time pointed out, the city had "no interest in growing just to be bigger" (Sanger 1975). He recognized the city should get denser, but he wanted to hold on to its small-town charms (Sanger 1975).

### **Proposition 2: Hire and Support Strong Professional Managers**

Once a city has a vision, it takes strong management capacity to make the dream come true. There is wide agreement that the fortunes of Kirkland improved in the 1960s when the city changed from a strong mayor to a city manager form of government. The strong mayor form left the city without the management skill it needed to get things done.

To give an example, the 1963 Comprehensive Plan recommended that a downtown waterfront park be built. But it was not until a few years later, when the city hired its first city manager, someone who knew how to obtain federal grants, that it began to implement its vision. Together with a parks director, who is remembered for his grant-writing abilities, the management team got the city moving toward its objectives. As one interviewee put it:

The [downtown] waterfront park had been talked about. Alan Locke [the new city manager] came from a city in Minnesota that had done a lot of waterfront projects. He saw the need for a comprehensive park plan to get the federal money. So he wrote the plan in one weekend and passed it in one month. Every one of the parks in the plan are the parks in Kirkland today. ... Locke knew there were lots of federal dollars for recreation land and Dave Gray, the parks director, was a master at writing the grants so it impressed the grantors.

By virtue of their talent, vision, and pragmatism, the staff enjoyed the support of the city council, creating a unified government that could move forward on various issues. One study participant put it this way: "The council didn't rubber stamp staff work, but it had a lot respect for what they sent up." Another said that the planning staff had vision that the council immediately saw the logic in it.

Describing the confidence the council had in its city manager, one former council member simply said: "If Al liked it, I liked it."

### **Proposition 3: Have a Collaborative City Council That Will Defend the Vision**

Elected leaders play a critical role by setting the rules for development, making investments in public infrastructure and providing overall direction for a city's future. A council must work as a unit — be able to make compromises and implement its vision of where it wants to go. In addition, a council must represent both development and preservation interests. If it can indeed represent both of these perspectives and work as a team to reach good compromises, a policy balance can be struck that encourages development while maintaining public support for growth.

These were the characteristics that were found in the Kirkland City Council. First, the council knew how to

compromise. According to one city official, "Early on they learned to compromise. They could accept compromise. Our council could have battles, and go have a beer after. ... We had a few council people who did not like compromising. They did not last very long."

Second, it embodied both business and neighborhood interests. "We had a dynamic council created by having both business and neighborhoods represented," a former council member said.

And third, it followed its plans for the city. According to a former city official: "Elected and appointed officials have been very careful and rigorous about applying those policies (from the comprehensive plans) ... in a very intelligent and consistent way."

#### **Proposition 4: Invest in Access and Amenities**

Investments in access and amenities serve two purposes. First, they make an area more attractive to development. Second, they enhance residents' satisfaction with their community, which is crucial for maintaining tolerance and support for change.

Kirkland was made more attractive to housing and employment through improvements in its accessibility, which was altered in two major ways. First, the State Route 520 bridge across Lake Washington was opened in 1963, making Kirkland directly accessible to Seattle. As one newspaper commented:

The new bridge was a conduit for growth and mobility. No longer would people ... have to drive around the lake or take the Mercer Island bridge. ... Otto Shneewind, an 80-year-old Kirkland resident, says the bridge has helped bring many changes to the Eastside community. "It was a nice little town, with three drugstores, two real good restaurants, a couple of barbershops and a bowling alley," he said. "Now we have apartments and condominiums by the glory." (Gough 1988)

Second, Kirkland benefited from its close proximity to the employment growth that was occurring in the neighboring cities of Seattle and Bellevue. Its centrality increased in relation to the economic engines of the region, making it a more attractive place for jobs and housing development.

Kirkland also made a number of investments in its amenities. These improvements combined with the access improvements further strengthened its attractiveness. It also increased citizen satisfaction, which helped maintain tolerance and support for change. As the city manager put it in 1971, they were consciously trying to "work the aesthetics":

A new hospital, a progressive school system, and a variety of cultural attractions, including art galleries and theater groups, help attract residents to Kirkland. One thing we consider important are our natural amenities. We are working toward creation of a series of waterfront parks interconnected by trails to other community facilities and schools. ... We have been striving to become a truly "people oriented" city. (Buckley 1971)

The most significant actions the city took to improve its amenities were the installation of a string of waterfront parks and a waterfront trail, the acquisition of wetlands and other natural areas, the development of neighborhood parks, the construction of ball parks and a public swimming pool, and several improvements to the downtown (see Figure 3). There, upgrades include better parking, a waterfront park and plaza, public art, pedestrian facilities, historic architectural restoration, and upgraded retailing.

One 1992 newspaper account captures the attractive powers of the human-scaled downtown this way: "It's difficult to imagine Kirkland without its low-key downtown. Even in the pouring rain there's something comfortable and charming about Lake Street, the main drag that leads visitors through the heart and soul of the city. It's a part of the city that feels like a sort of yuppie small town, with its art galleries, restaurants, bakery, waterfront parks, bookstores, and boutiques." (Kusumoto, 1992)

Another columnist discussed the overall emphasis on amenities back in 1976: "It is the sense of stability as well as Kirkland's feeling of smallness and the emergence of an active art and cultural interest, that have been the foundation of Kirkland's rebirth. ... 'Kirkland wants to keep its small town flavor,' says Chuck Morgan. 'That, and the emphasis on history and the arts, is what makes the city appealing. ... We have quality of life here. We're not going to lose it.'" (Hale, 1976)

Kirkland's crown jewels are its parks, particularly those along the Lake Washington waterfront. Eight waterfront

parks are placed every one- to two-thirds of a mile along the shoreline and cover roughly 25 percent of the 5.5 miles of shoreline. Another 25 percent of the shoreline is accessible by public trails and easements. According to one newspaper report, Kirkland had more parkland per capita in 1976 than any city in the state of Washington.



▣ *Figure 3*  
Kirkland Parks Map



▣ *Figure 2*  
One of Kirkland's  
Waterfront Parks

Courtesy Kirkland  
Downtown on the Lake

In addition to the parks, there were other improvements to the city's amenities. While the city was an important player in most of these, not all were the result of governmental initiatives. Several local improvement districts, for example, were approved by downtown business owners to finance downtown improvements. In addition, building restorations, public art projects, park land donations and retail tenant improvements were made by private individuals working to improve their city.

Residents, developers, and businesses alike responded to the access and amenities. One developer summed up its attractions this way: " It has location, location, location — proximity to the water, to Seattle, and to the freeway — and it's a walkable town that's uncongested with small town atmosphere and lots of waterfront parks."

A former city planner concurred: "One of the things that brought about the increase in density is the attraction of Kirkland as a place to live. If you ask developers and builders where they would like to build an apartment [building] that would be kept full, they would say Kirkland."

The attractions of Kirkland not only worked to bring in new residents, they also brought new industry, particularly offices, which came to take advantage of Kirkland as a good place to work and live. Quite importantly, the progressive increase in amenities kept the people who were already living in Kirkland from reacting negatively to the growth.

### **Proposition 5: Regulate Growth to Balance Conservation and Development**

In Kirkland, higher density was facilitated by the zoning code. The most common single-family zoning districts were either 7,200 or 8,500 square feet per lot. These standards are not in themselves particularly high in density, but when coupled with the subdivision standards discussed below, they yielded relatively high single-family density compared to other cities in the county. In fact, single family subdivisions in Kirkland during the 1980s achieved an average density of about five lots per acre, compared to less than two lots per acre for all cities in the county during the same period.

Medium- and high-density residential zoning (eight or more units per acre) covered about 13 percent of Kirkland in 1990 (City of Kirkland, August 1992). This is not a large portion of the city, however multifamily housing was produced not only by multifamily zoning districts. Multifamily housing was allowed in nearly all nonresidential and planned-area zoning districts, such as the central business district zones, the planned area development zones, and the freeway commercial zones. In fact, nearly 40 percent of all of the areas greater than five acres that changed from some other use to multifamily between 1970 and 1990 were not in multifamily zoning districts. They were in planned-area districts that allowed for a variety of land uses (typically, single family, multifamily, and office). As a result of this zoning arrangement, multifamily housing made up 55 percent of the city's housing stock in 2000, according to the U.S. Census.

Citywide, only about 12 percent of Kirkland's land area was zoned in nonresidential districts. However, this was enough, given the allowable densities there, to permit a substantial level of employment growth. In addition, mixing of land uses was encouraged by allowing a variety of land uses in many zoning districts, including allowing jobs in higher density residential zones. For example:

The Professional Residential zones are defined as office uses but may also allow residential and some commercial uses. Similarly, many of the commercial zones such as the Central Business District allow residential and office uses while many of the medium and high density residential zones also allow office and limited commercial uses. An additional consideration is that institutional uses are allowed in all zones in the City. (City of Kirkland, August 1992)

In addition to using a basic zoning district structure in which mixed land uses and higher density were encouraged, the city allowed a number of areas to be up-zoned and redeveloped into higher density land uses. Between 1970 and 1990, for example, approximately 200 acres were developed into multifamily housing inside what was the 1970 city limits. Of these 200 acres, roughly half were in single-family use in 1970. Similarly, of the 300 acres of new job-related land uses that were created inside the 1970 city limits between 1970 and 1990, about one-third were in single-family use in 1970. While there was also down zoning occurring during this period, the city did allow up-zoning, where appropriate, to achieve more intense and varied land use.

Kirkland's development regulations were configured in other ways to promote development as well. Greater single-family densities were achieved, for example, by using planned developments to permit smaller lots, allowing more wetland area to be counted when computing the allowable density of developments, and allowing narrower driveways. Other measures included eliminating minimum single-family lot widths, allowing lot averaging to permit some substandard lots in subdivisions, allowing narrower access easements instead of wider public rights of way for small short plats, allowing these easements to be counted in the density calculations for short plats of two or fewer lots, allowing density to be transferred from unbuildable portions of lots, allowing flag- and wedge-shaped lots, and not requiring sidewalks on both sides of residential streets shorter than 400 feet.

Swifter permitting was achieved by using regulations rather than the EIS process to protect the environment; raising the short plat threshold from three to nine lots, and allowing short plats and subdivisions to be approved by the planning director and a hearing examiner, respectively. These procedures not only shortened permitting time, but also reduced the fees for permit processing, because the fees were directly related to the staff time required for processing. As one planner said: "When people would come to the counter, it was always 'You're so much cheaper and faster than the county or anyplace else.' It would take us two or three months to approve a short plat, but for other cities they say it would be six months to just get on their docket."

The clarity and specificity of Kirkland's regulations, as well as the supportive attitude of public officials, also were appreciated by the development industry. The rules, for example, were detailed and tough, but it was their clarity more than their strictness that seemed to matter. "Most businessmen mention the cooperative attitude at City Hall as a plus for them. ... They suggest changes I have to make," Keith Kehoe, redeveloper of an old hospital, told a local newspaper. "And they give me suggestions, but they aren't heavy handed."

City officials seemed to understand that they had a responsibility to both the permit applicants and the public, and believed they could do good for both groups. And the planning staff was willing to work cooperatively with applicants.

### **Proposition 6: Protect "Sacred Spaces" and Compensate for Change with Amenities**

The rules of the development game in Kirkland were there not only to facilitate greater density and land-use mixing, but also to protect existing neighborhoods by concentrating most of the growth on vacant land in a limited number of areas. Development was channeled toward some locations and away from others. Inside "old Kirkland," for instance, or the block groups that were within the city limits by 1970, 67 percent of the development occurred on vacant land, and nearly 60 percent of the change occurred in 20 percent of the block groups. And multifamily housing was even more concentrated into certain neighborhoods. For example, nearly 66 percent of the multifamily acreage that was added between 1970 and 1990 occurred in 20 percent of the city's block groups.

Notably, there was a strong association observed between neighborhoods that received most of the multifamily housing development and those that received most of the additional park and open space acreage. For example, the six block groups that received nearly two-thirds of the new multifamily acreage received 50 percent of the new open space acreage and 72 percent of the new park acreage created between 1970 and 1990. This pattern is consistent with the city's basic values emphasizing parks and open space, and the city's commitment to respect and protect its neighborhoods as growth occurred.

Even greater concentration was found for nonresidential land-use changes. Between 1970 and 1990, 82 percent

of the new commercial acreage, 88 percent of the office acreage, and 77 percent of the new industrial acreage were added to just 20 percent of the block groups. Institutional uses also were highly concentrated. In sum, about half of all land-use changes, two-thirds of the changes to multifamily housing, and about 80 percent to 90 percent of the nonresidential changes were located in 20 percent of the neighborhoods.

One way of viewing this concentration could be to argue that it served the interests of the more powerful neighborhoods by protecting them from unwanted change. However, that view is not supported by the evidence.

It is generally agreed that the Houghton neighborhood was the most powerful and resistant to change. At one time, five of the six city council members were from Houghton, and a neighborhood council there had statutory veto authority over land-use changes. Nevertheless, the Houghton area received its proportionate share of land-use changes. Notably, it also received more than its fair share of new parks. In fact, in strictly mathematical terms, it received more than three times its fair share. However, there were other considerations, such as its waterfront location, that made it a good location for parks that serve the entire city.

Thus, the concentration of Kirkland's growth left the immediate neighborhoods of the vast majority of city voters relatively undisturbed by development. It is this majority that the city council was most concerned with. Concentration was not done to protect certain powerful neighborhoods. It was done to protect the neighborhoods of the majority of Kirkland citizens.

One area of the city that was important to everyone, regardless of where they lived, was the downtown core. It was the closest thing in the city to what Randy Hester (1990) refers to as "sacred space." The downtown constituted the "heart and soul" of Kirkland, and the protection of its human-scaled, pedestrian-friendly, historical charm was a top priority in the city (see Figure 5).



▣ *Figure 5*  
Downtown Street  
Courtesy Kirkland Heritage Society

Part of the city's plans since at least the 1963 Comprehensive Plan had been to ring the downtown with higher density housing. However, between 1970 and 1990, very little land-use change actually occurred in downtown Kirkland. The Central South block group, which makes up most of what is generally thought of as downtown Kirkland, and other downtown locations, received only 36 acres of land-use changes, or about 1 percent of all changes citywide. And more than three-fourths of the change occurred on vacant and single-family land — not the important downtown elements. The human-scaled commercial buildings and the parks are what most people cherished about downtown Kirkland, and less than two acres of land used for commercial purposes in 1970 were changed to other uses by 1990. No open space or park land was lost, and about one acre of park land was added.

The occurrence of so little change in this highly valued area, together with little change in most people's neighborhoods, allowed most residents to be unalarmed by transitions that were occurring elsewhere in their city. The places people cared most about were not changing, except perhaps for the better.

A boom in condominium development in downtown Kirkland during the first part of the 1990s shed additional light on this process. Several large housing projects on the order of five stories high were completed in the city's core. Simultaneously, Kirkland experienced a severe citizen backlash against the changes occurring in their "sacred" downtown. In response to public concern, the city passed a temporary moratorium on buildings more than 35 feet high. Not only was this remarkable for Kirkland, it was a rare event for the entire state. The lack of change in downtown Kirkland between 1970 and 1990, despite the fact that city plans did allow growth proposals for that area, helped to protect one of the most important parts of the community and helped to avoid public discontent with the changes occurring in the city. The city is, in a way, fortunate that its plans for downtown growth did not take off until the 1990s because its trek toward higher density and land-use mixing might have been stymied by earlier public reaction.

## **Proposition 7: Provide Developers the Resources They Need**

For development to occur, there must be buildable land and development capital. Buildable land requires adequate infrastructure capacity and sufficient land supply. Capital requires a combination of entrepreneurship and the support of financial institutions. Kirkland provided buildable land by employing a rational zoning strategy and by ensuring that its infrastructure did not become a bottleneck to growth.

An analysis of where development occurred in relationship to zoning indicates that the city zoned land for development that was either vacant or used at lower intensities than the zoning would permit. In both instances, the market could efficiently convert the land to the higher intensity uses permitted by the zoning code. For example, of the 900 acres of land converted to job-related land uses between 1970 and 1990, 68 percent were vacant and 21 percent were used for single-family housing in 1970. Similarly, of the 600 acres converted to multifamily housing, about 57 percent were vacant and 32 percent were single-family housing in 1970. Thus, nearly 90 percent of the land that was converted to multifamily or job-related land uses between 1970 and 1990 was either vacant or single family in 1970. By allowing less intensively used single-family and vacant land to be developed for jobs and multifamily housing, the city helped provide an economically feasible land supply for development.

Of course, having the land zoned for development is insufficient if permits can't be issued because of inadequate infrastructural capacity. The city is served by the Northshore Utility District, which has had more than enough water supply to meet the city's needs. In fact, the Northshore District was over-designed to meet the needs of growth in the area, and it is surprising that this has not had a detrimental effect on growth by requiring high water rates to cover its greater-than-needed capacity. Sewer capacity also has been provided in anticipation of growth. On-site infrastructure is provided by the developers themselves. This has enabled adequate on-site services to be provided, and its cost has not hampered development.

Development capital has not always been easily available in Kirkland. Mixed-use buildings, for example, have been difficult to finance. In addition, during the 1970s, when the city was building its first waterfront office space, bankers were reluctant to make loans for office projects in Kirkland. Nevertheless, certain entrepreneurs signed unusual letters of credit that exposed themselves to greater financial risk in order to build the waterfront office space they felt would be successful. It was a success, and future financing was easier to obtain. This suggests that entrepreneurship, rather than banks, can be a key to innovative development, under certain conditions.

## **OUTCOMES**

Between 1960 and 1990, Kirkland made considerable progress toward a more compact and complete urban form. According to census data, from 1970 to 1990 its dwelling-unit density increased by 61 percent, growing from about 400 to about 650 dwelling units per square mile. This increase was about 2.5 times the median increase experienced by all other Washington cities and census-designated places. Some of this was driven by annexations of denser areas, but even excluding these areas, Kirkland's density increased by 57 percent from 1970 to 1990.

Census figures also show that in 1990, Kirkland had a nearly perfectly balanced mix of jobs and housing. Its number of jobs was essentially equal to its number of employed residents. Things were quite different in 1970. At that time the city had roughly half the jobs it needed to employ its residents.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

The Kirkland case suggests several strategies that were probably key to its transformation. If they were to work in other cases they could become a set of planning principles.

- Visualize and value places where people want to be.
- Hire and support strong professional managers.
- Have a collaborative city council that will defend and follow the vision.
- Invest in access and amenities.
- Regulate growth in order to balance conservation and development.



- Protect "sacred spaces" and compensate for growth with new public amenities.
- Provide developers with an adequate land supply and predictable permitting.

## CONCLUSION

The case of Kirkland, Washington, should give heart to planners seeking to increase the density, mix and balance of land uses in their communities. It has managed to attract jobs and housing, become one of the most compact and complete communities in the Pacific Northwest, and contribute to less auto dependence and more land conservation in the region while creating a vital, attractive, livable community.

The case study has suggested a number of principles that together compose an overall strategy for creating the kind of changes that Kirkland experienced. They had a vision of becoming a place where people want to be, professional management that could implement the vision, and a collaborative city council that supported the staff, knew how to compromise, represented the full range of political interests, and stayed committed to its plans. Investments were made in access and amenities to attract both jobs and housing and to reduce resistance to change. A balanced set of development controls were employed that encouraged the mixing of uses, provided for needed upzoning and redevelopment, and delivered flexibility where necessary. Sacred places were protected and new development was channeled to a smaller portion of the city where amenities were provided to compensate for change. And finally, developers were provided with the land and infrastructural resources they needed to make their projects feasible.

At an even more general level, these propositions seem to fit longstanding principles of successful urban planning and development. It requires vision, management skill, political support, locational advantages, flexible regulations, entitlements, economic feasibility and physical resources.

Thus, perhaps we already know how to successfully plan the transition to more compact and complete communities. But by reviewing the stories of places like Kirkland, Washington, we may learn some useful lessons and strengthen our confidence in the potential for successful planning.

*Gary Pivo is Professor of Urban Planning, Professor of Natural Resources and Senior Fellow in the Office of Economic Development and Policy Analysis at the University of Arizona. He has published extensively on suburban centers, less auto-dependent urban form, cluster housing, growth management, and sustainable urbanization. He served as Dean of the Graduate College at the University of Arizona and Chair of the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington. Pivo is a practicing consultant, having worked with public and private clients in California, Washington, and Arizona. He previously served as Special Assistant to the Washington Growth Strategies Commission and President of 1000 Friends of Washington. He holds a master's in Regional Planning from Cornell University and a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley.*

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