



FORT&RRA

Focus Groups Among Long Term and Newer
Residents of Issaquah, Sammamish,
Redmond, & Kirkland, WA
May 2017

Methodology

- ▶ Total of four focus groups:
 - 2 groups of Issaquah/Sammamish residents (one of newer and one of long term residents) conducted May 2nd, 2017
 - 2 groups of Kirkland/Redmond residents (one of newer and one of long term residents) conducted May 4th, 2017
- ▶ Focus groups were moderated by Ian Stewart and Riley Jones of EMC Research.

Rapid Growth Makes Progress Look Like the Opposite

- ▶ Residents see their communities changing rapidly.
- ▶ They deal everyday with the impacts of growth: traffic, overburdened schools, construction, the loss of open space and the sense that their community is losing its character.
- ▶ To residents, the changes seem like “self-inflicted chaos”.
- ▶ Their knee-jerk reaction is a desire to stop or slow down the chaos.

“I used to be able to drive around the plateau and see that open space of 5, 10 acres, that you would see animals on, horses, goats, whatever they have on the property. Those are all being developed into 10 homes, 12 homes, or 20 plus homes. It's not that green space anymore.”

- Long-Term/Iss-Samm

No One Is To Blame, But No One is In Charge

- ▶ Residents don't think their city is to blame for the chaos.
- ▶ They don't really understand what their cities are doing or what their responsibilities are.
- ▶ From their perspective, it seems like no one is doing anything to manage growth.
- ▶ They want something, anything, to be done to make things more manageable, and as they see no alternative, they initially gravitate to wanting to pause or stop growth.

In Times of Rapid Growth, it's Hard to Cut Through

- ▶ Because so much is happening so fast and things are so chaotic, blanket negative opinions about growth have coalesced.
- ▶ While residents understand growth cannot be stopped, cutting through their entrenched anxiety will be difficult.
- ▶ There will be growing pains to endure, but ultimately what residents want is to preserve the character of their communities and return to a sense of order.

Long Term Residents Are More Negative Than Newer Residents

- ▶ While all residents are concerned about growth, longer term residents fear the loss of their community's character, and view growth much more negatively than newer residents.
- ▶ Individuals that were screened as more conservative are particularly resistant to growth and change.
- ▶ Newer residents are cautiously optimistic about growth, although they also do not like dealing with growing pains.
- ▶ It will be critical to assure older residents that the core values of their city will be maintained, whereas newer residents are looking for assurance that the chaos will settle down and be managed.

There Are Key Shared Values

- ▶ Residents value green space, small town character, and want communal spaces for neighbors to interact.
- ▶ Residents know growth can't be stopped, and when given parameters for discussion they describe communities that are walkable, preserve open space, and include some densely populated areas.
- ▶ It will be key to communicate and assure residents that as the city grows, these values will be protected and maintained in to the future.

"More transit. Improvement to local roads. More natural spaces, of course like trees, parks, throughout the city. And being walkable. I think having a city plan where you can leave the car somewhere and navigate throughout the city to go about our daily needs, I think would be great."

- Long-Term/Iss-Sam Group

"I'm concerned though, because of all the population coming and the impact that it's going to have environmentally. It's such a beautiful area, so keeping up with the growth and the building of buildings, but keeping them green somehow, or trying to find that balance."

- Newer/Red-Kirk Group

Willing to Make Trade-Offs For Key Values

- ▶ Residents were given a set of words and phrases and asked which they most want for their city.
- ▶ Near universal choices were: “density”, “conservation of open spaces outside city limit”, “more natural spaces throughout the city”, “mixed-use”, and “walkability”.
- ▶ Residents understand that in order to grow and preserve their core values, they will have to make trade-offs, and they see denser, mixed use, walkable areas as a way to preserve what is most important.

Respondent: For attributes I put mix of residential and commercial, walkable, close to transit, and available parking, keeping the green space and the parks, and mix of single family and multi-family.”

Interviewer: “Others? Attributes that you wrote down?”

Respondent: “Favorable quality of life. I feel like that protects the environment, would save a lot of time in commuting, and unnecessary time spent and, boom, right there, everything's nice and close. I find it appealing, is the ideal.”

- Long-Term/Iss-Sam Group

“I have more housing close to transit goes with preserve single-family neighborhoods by prohibiting construction of multi-unit dwellings. I’m all about concentrating things where people who want to walk, can walk. And the ones who want to drive, we can live in our neighborhood and drive.”

- Long-Term/Red-Kirk Group

Imagery is Even Better At Communicating



W



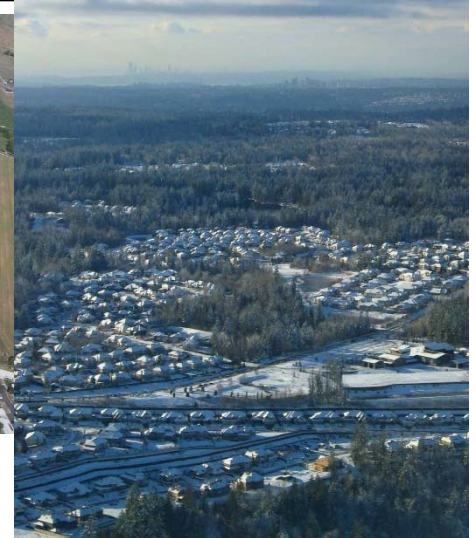
X



Y



Z



Visuals Cut Through The Clutter

- ▶ Using unified language to talk about growth would be helpful at assuaging anxiety, but showing visuals much more effectively cuts through the negativity and explains a shared future.
- ▶ Residents could immediately see how this future would accommodate more people, provide them with new opportunities, and preserve what matters most about their communities.
- ▶ Even those with the most entrenched negative attitudes about growth and development understood and gravitated towards the vision expressed in vision X.

"I see the more practical solution — X. That's the way we've got to go. We've got to start with density and start from the areas that matter near freeways, near transit, stuff like that"

- Newer/Iss-Sam Group

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Growth is ever-present in these residents' lives, and they don't see anyone doing anything to manage it. It seems out of control, and it is making them anxious and negative.
- ▶ Fighting through that entrenched sense of chaos and negativity will be difficult.
- ▶ Residents care about communal spaces, green open spaces, and a sense of community. There is the opportunity to latch onto these values when talking about shaping the future.
- ▶ Showing visuals easily steers residents to understand how mixed use dense development in central cores is the best path forward.

Accessible
Desirable
Livable

Waterfront-centric
Multi-generations
Peaceful
Affordable
Convenience
Balanced-Living

Trees
Clean

Charming
Livability

Downtown
Lifestyle
Personality
Taxes
Millennial
Class-Knit
Bikes Cleaner

Mobile Village

Walkable
Vibrant

Waterfront

Urban

View

Portland
Bullet-proof
Encompassing

Asphalt-jungle
Neighborhoods

Affordable housing
Village-within-a-city

Quaint
Dense

Kind
Modern

Inviting
Quality
Bike

Safe

Self-sustaining
Balance

Density
Balanced

Vital
Development

Environmentally-friendly

Kumbayah Entertaining
Non-bigoted
Recreational

Progressive

Connected

Family
Sustainability
Cohesiveness

Diverse

Relaxing
Treeless
Cohesive

Green

Parking

Planned
Futuristic
Destination

Relaxed
Artistic
Sunshine
Human-scale

Subway-Transit
Self-contained
Uncluttered

Open-Space

Public-transportation

Energetic
Connection

Loss-traffic

Inclusive

Viability

Attractive
Mixed-Use
Honey
Marina

Open
Community
Beautiful

Convenient

Optimized

Bayesian

Plus

Multi-served
More-parks

Comprehensive
Garden-city
Greenwich
Expansion

Exceptional

Vacation-destination

Golden-triangle

Welcoming

Versatile

Diversified
Proximity

Traffic

Qalatar
Lakesview
Recallant
Bright

Thriving

Movement

Small

Exciting

Innovative

Pedestrian
Differentiated
Interconnected

High-Tech

Dynamic

Gorgeous
Connections
Autonomous

Stay-the-same

Healthy

Friendly

Sustainable

Big

Natural

Extension

Anti-Believe

Pleasant

There's A Plan For That!



Comprehensive Plan



Cross Kirkland
Corridor Master Plan



Transportation Master
Plan



Juanita Drive Corridor
Plan



Parks, Recreation and
Open Space Plan



Totem Lake Park
Master Plan



Urban Forestry Plan



Parks and Street
Levies



Surface Water Master
Plan



Join the Conversation...

Kirkland Urban







Park Lane Mixed Use Project (previously antique mall site)

View West @ Kirkland Way (Near KPC)





Questions?