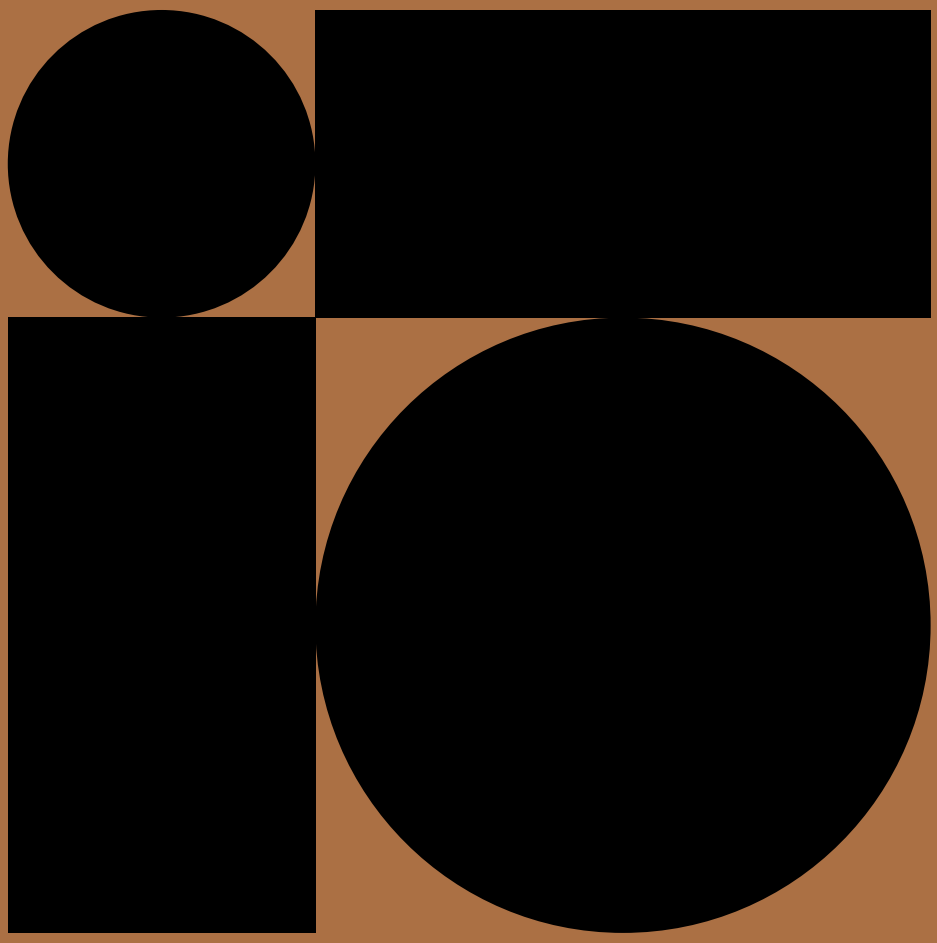
Report 2026

Totem Lake Southern Industrial Subarea

New Pathways for the Industrial District

A Strategic Compass and 9 Design Concepts



BLOXHUB

CITY OF KIRKLAND WASHINGTON

Table of Contents

Introduction **3**

Background 4

Location 6

Purpose and acknowledgement 8

Strategic Compass **10**

The Guiding Framework 11

Vision 12

Selection Criteria 13

Nine Design Concepts **14**

Connection to CKC 17

Treasure Mapping and Explorer Route 23

Wayfinding and Murals 29

Unsealing Surfaces 35

The Generator 41

The Warehouse 47

Regulatory Toolbox 53

The Forum 59

Community and Identity (Goat Town) 65

Phased approach 72

Moving Forward **74**

What now? Fill in the Knowledge Gaps 75

From strategic direction to first implementation steps 76

Open Questions for the City of Kirkland 78

Closing **80**

Appendix **82**



AI-enhanced visualization based on Google Earth imagery

The Southern Industrial Subarea sits between industrial workspaces, trail infrastructure, natural systems and new urban growth. This combination of working landscapes, hidden connections and future pressure is what gives the area its distinct character and potential.

Background



Tucked just southwest of Totem Lake Village, across I-405, lies a part of Kirkland that many people pass by or through without fully seeing. The Southern Industrial Subarea (the SIS) covers approximately 100 acres of mostly low-slung warehouses built between the 1960s and 1980s.

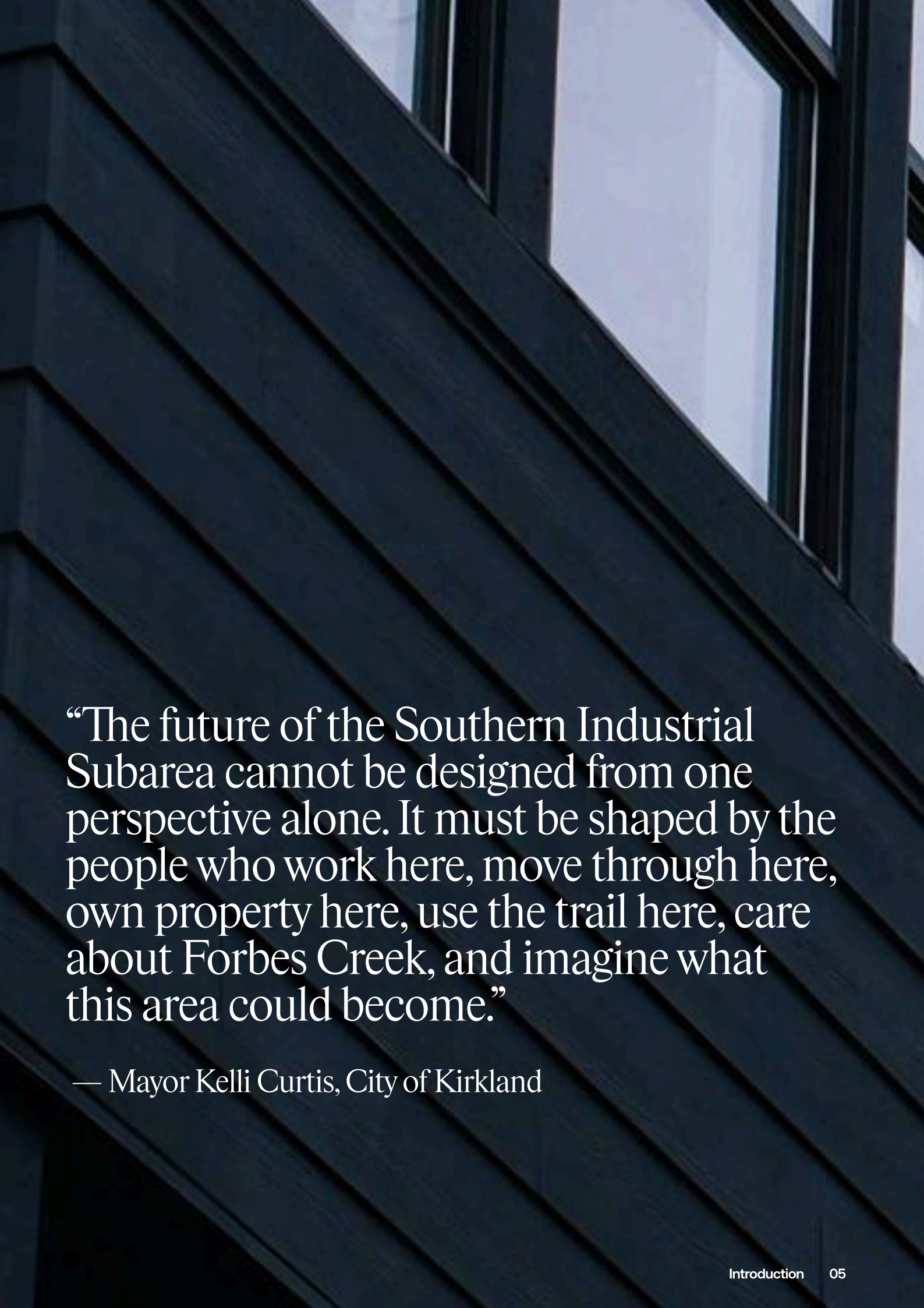
Behind the warehouse facades is a thriving ecosystem of small businesses: indoor recreation centers, small manufacturers, business offices, auto workshops, food producers, craftspeople, a brewery, and nonprofits serving the wider community - alongside new housing projects adding to the existing residential community. The Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) – a major regional bike trail connecting Kirkland to Woodinville and Bellevue – bisects the area north to south. Forbes Creek flows through it, largely invisible behind warehouses and parking lots. The area also sits within the Totem Lake Urban Center, where much of Kirkland's future housing and employment growth is planned. This combination of industrial heritage, natural assets, trail access, and proximity to a growing urban center is what gives the SIS its complexity - and its unique potential.

In December 2024, the City Council adopted a policy calling for a new plan that would foster "a new mixed-use, walkable sustainable neighborhood that leverages its proximity to the Cross Kirkland Corridor and the Village at Totem Lake."

Key principles include retaining existing buildings and businesses, preventing displacement, expanding affordable housing, encouraging trail-oriented development, and creating access to open space. These are ambitious and, in some respects, competing objectives – and achieving them requires creativity, cross-sector collaboration, and a willingness to learn from places that have navigated similar challenges before.

To address this challenge, the City of Kirkland partnered with BLOXHUB, a Nordic Hub for Sustainable Urbanization based in Copenhagen. The partnership builds on a previous successful collaboration in 2024, and it also ties into the area's own Nordic roots. North Kirkland was shaped in large part by Scandinavian settlers, with Finn Hill named after Finnish immigrants, Norway Hill after Norwegians, and the award-winning Juanita Beach Park Bathhouse reflects that Nordic heritage in its design. Applying Danish design thinking to the SIS, centered on people, walking, biking, livability, and adaptive reuse, is a natural continuation of that history.

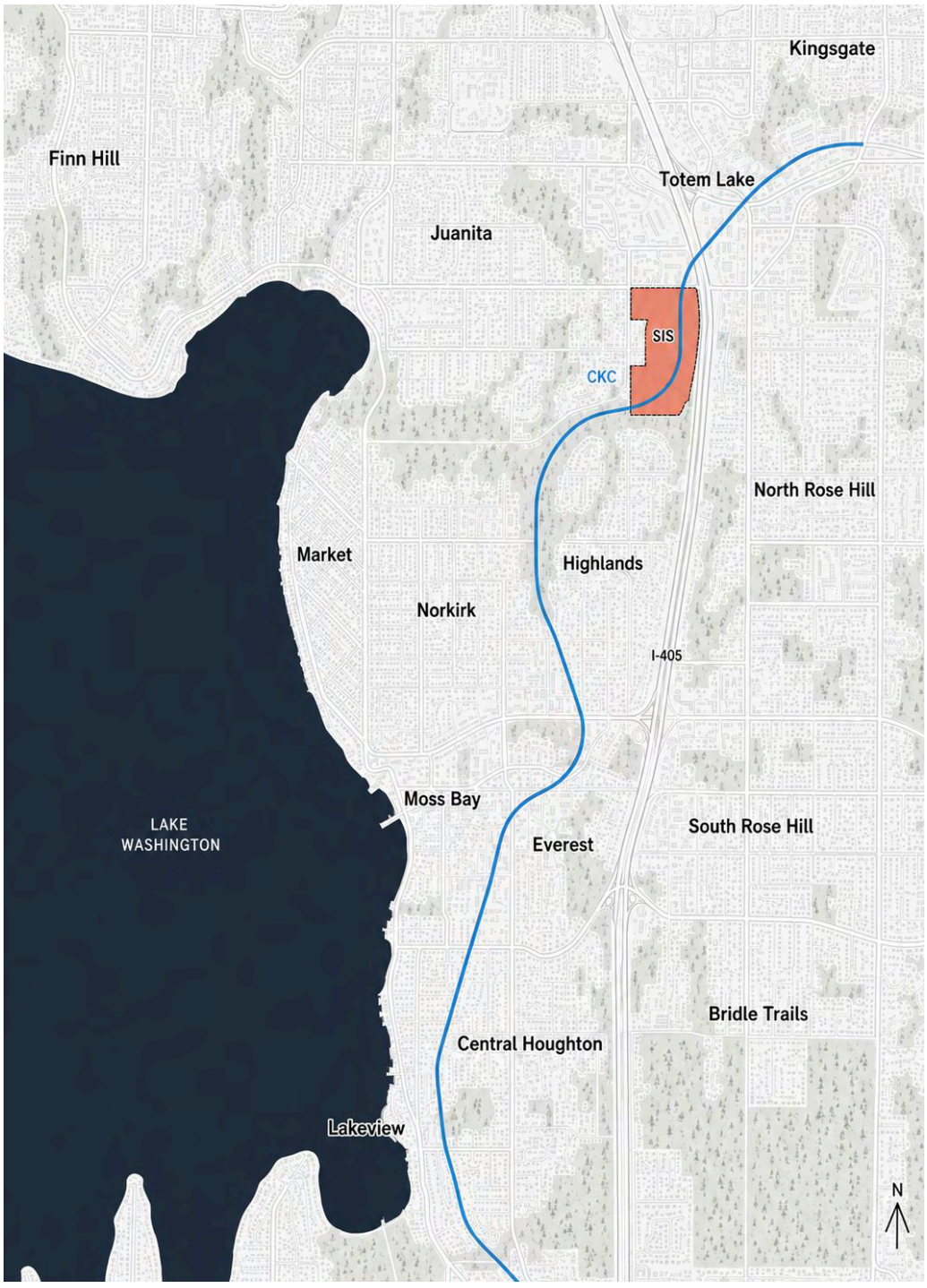
This project unfolded over six months: stakeholder interviews and a first workshop in spring 2026 to identify community priorities; a Strategic Compass in May to translate those insights into guiding principles; and a second workshop in June to co-develop the nine design concepts showcased in this report.



“The future of the Southern Industrial Subarea cannot be designed from one perspective alone. It must be shaped by the people who work here, move through here, own property here, use the trail here, care about Forbes Creek, and imagine what this area could become.”

— Mayor Kelli Curtis, City of Kirkland

Location



Map data: City of Kirkland and OpenStreetMap contributors. Visual style modified using AI.

Situated between Totem Lake Village, I-405, the Cross Kirkland Corridor and Forbes Creek, the Southern Industrial Subarea brings together light industry, regional connections, natural systems and future urban growth.



Purpose & acknowledgements

Purpose of this report
This report is not a final plan. It is a stakeholder-supported direction and a set of actionable concepts for piloting – a starting point for the sub-area planning process the City of Kirkland will now lead. The nine design concepts are grounded in the area's existing character, designed to be tested at small scale, and intended to build on, not replace, what is already there.

The report is organized in two parts. The first part showcases the Strategic Compass: the vision, principles, and selection criteria that frame all nine concepts. The second part presents each concept in full. The report closes with a What Now section: recommended next steps and open questions for the City of Kirkland.

Partners and acknowledgement
This project is the result of a collaboration between the City of Kirkland and BLOXHUB, made possible by a grant from the Scan Design Foundation.
BLOXHUB facilitated the process and coordinated a team of Nordic experts: 3XN GXN, bringing expertise in architecture and circular reuse; Schønherr, offering expertise in landscape architecture and nature-based urban planning; and AGORA, contributing expertise in community engagement and the role of civil servants as facilitators of change (see Appendix for full bios).
City staff were active participants throughout, in the workshops, in stakeholder conversations, and in shaping the concepts and principles in this report.

Above all, this report reflects the time and knowledge of the many people who contributed to the process: the business owners, property owners, housing developers, residents, trail users, community members, council-members, planning commissioners, and city staff who joined the workshops, opened their doors for site visits and interviews, and shared their honest views on what the SIS is today and what it could become.

A special thank you to Mayor Kelli Curtis, whose words at the first workshop set the tone for everything that followed.

PROJECT PARTNERS

BLOXHUB CITY OF KIRKLAND WASHINGTON 3XN GXN schønherr AGORA

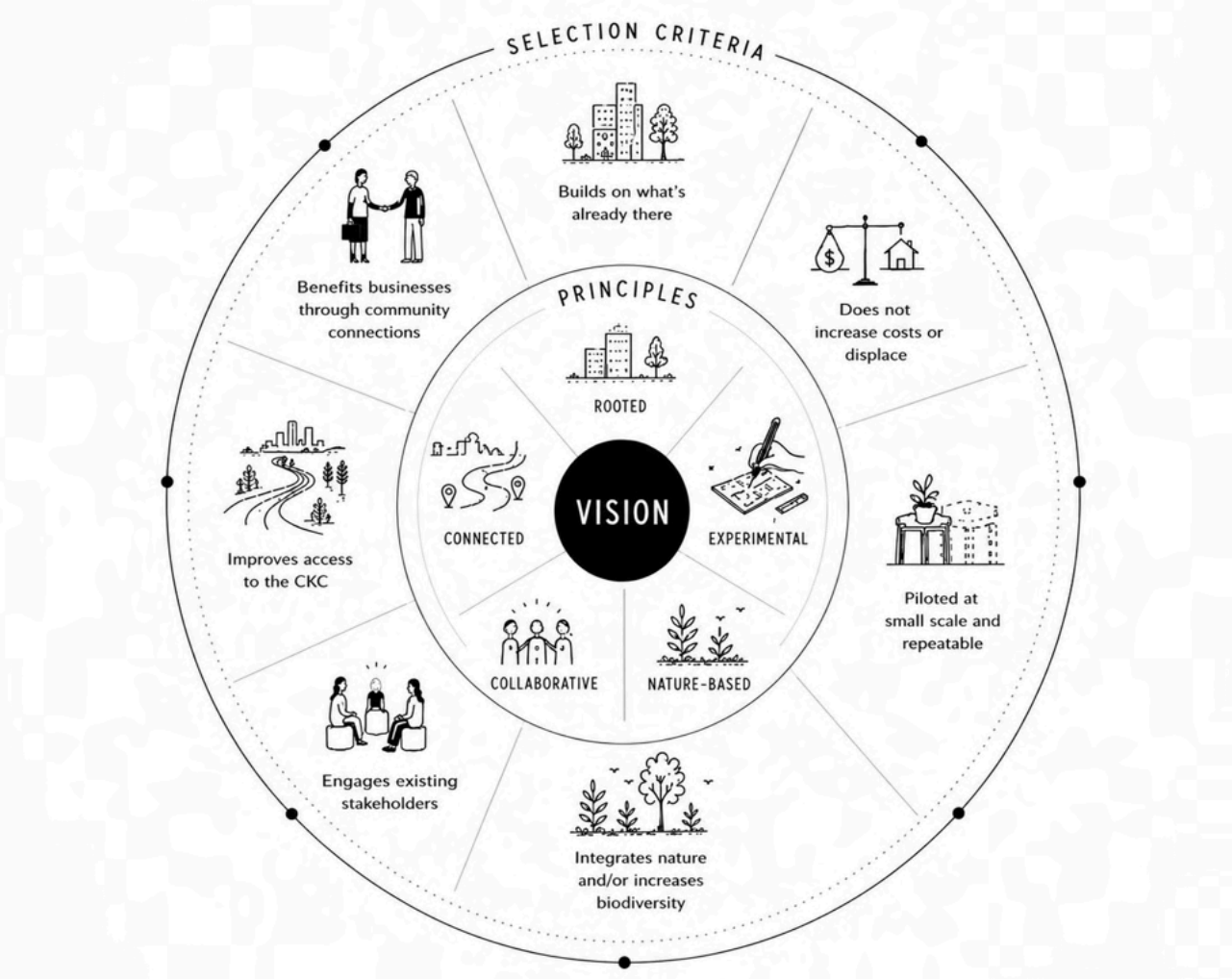


01

Strategic Compass

The Guiding Framework

The Strategic Compass is the guiding framework for reimagining the SIS. It is developed from stakeholder input gathered through the process, reflecting the priorities, concerns, and aspirations of local businesses, property owners, residents, and city staff, and shaped through dialogue with the Nordic expert team.



The framework serves two purposes: it was used to select and refine the nine design concepts in this report, among the approximately 100 ideas developed at Workshop 1, ensuring each one is grounded in shared values; and it is intended as a reference point to inspire future planning and investment decisions across the city.

The Strategic Compass, presented above, consists of a shared vision statement, five guiding principles, and a set of idea selection criteria.

Guiding Principles
These principles define the values that guide action towards the shared vision.

- **Connected** (within itself and with its surroundings)
- **Experimental** (evolving through pilots)
- **Rooted** (preserving and building on what's there)
- **Nature-based** (using nature as infrastructure)
- **Collaborative** (building relationships)

Vision

Vision Statement

The area is Kirkland's district for makers and doers – a place where neighbors know each other and existing businesses are valued and supported. The Cross Kirkland Corridor is the living spine of daily life, and nature is woven into the fabric of the district. It is affordable, active, connected, and livable. Change happens through people and pilots, building on what is already here.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria translate the five principles into practice. To be qualified, an idea must meet all seven criteria.



1. Build on what exists

Retains and builds on what is already there: buildings and infrastructure, businesses, housing, community, and industrial and maker heritage, while strengthening the area's distinct identity.



2. Pilot and scale

Can be tested at small scale with available resources, then repeated, adapted, or scaled over time.



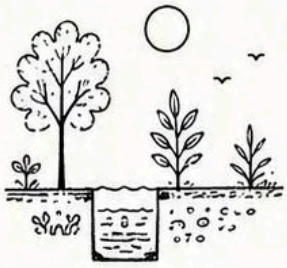
3. Co-create with stakeholders

Engages existing stakeholders, including businesses, property owners, and residents, in shaping the area's development.



4. Protect affordability

Does not increase costs for owners, workers, residents, or users, and does not displace existing businesses.



5. Nature as infrastructure

Integrates green or blue infrastructure as an asset and increases biodiversity.



6. Strengthen CKC connections

Orients toward and improves access to the CKC as the area's spine.



7. Create shared value

Creates benefits for businesses through stronger connections to the community in and beyond the SIS.



Collective fit

Together, the ideas should benefit all key groups: existing and future residents, workers, business owners, entrepreneurs, walkers and cyclists, and nature.

02

Design Concepts

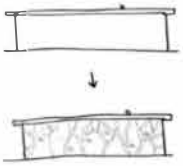
Nine Design Concepts



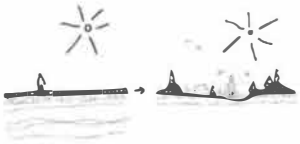
CONNECTION TO CKC



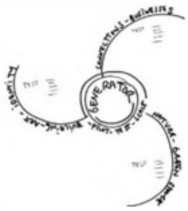
TREASURE MAPPING &
EXPLORER ROUTE



WAYFINDING AND MURALS



UNSEALING SURFACES



THE GENERATOR



THE WAREHOUSE



REGULATORY TOOLBOX



THE FORUM



COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

The nine concepts were developed collaboratively, building on the vision and principles of the Strategic Compass. They reflect the collective thinking of local stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, residents, trail users, city staff, and are shaped by Nordic expertise and grounded in the specific conditions of the SIS. The concepts are interconnected and designed to be started at a small scale. Each includes a pilot opportunity – the lowest-cost, lowest-barrier first move – so that action can begin before the full concept is in place. They are not meant to be implemented in isolation or in a fixed sequence; each can serve as an entry point, with connections to the others emerging over time.

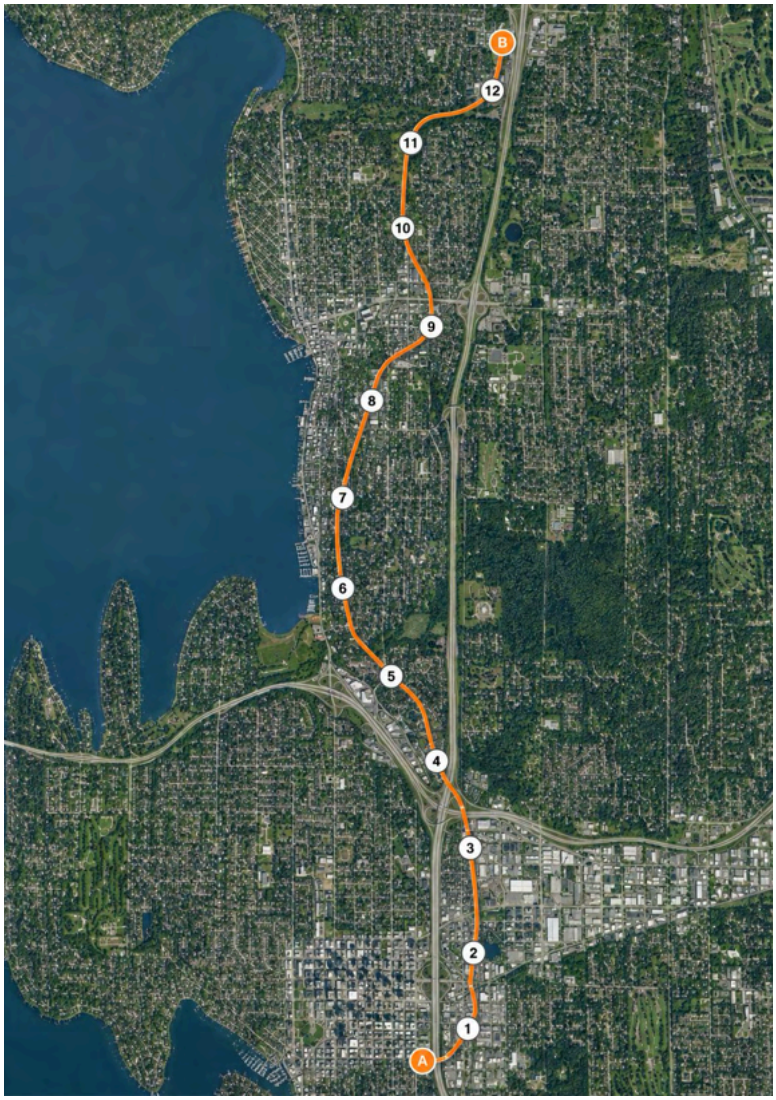
The Nordic experts from 3XN GXN, Schønherr, and AGORA remain available for questions, references, and further inspiration as the concepts move into action



Concept 1
Connection to CKC







The Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) is one of the area's great assets, yet most SIS businesses have no physical or visual connection to it – fences, wetlands, terrain, and private property block access. This concept creates a coherent pedestrian and bicycle-friendly connection grid linking the CKC to businesses and public spaces within the SIS, and to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and amenities. Reserving locations for trail access points through individual parcels now, before development decisions are made, is essential to keeping future options open.

In Practice

Where to start

Use the city's existing inventory of identified future CKC connection points to prioritize the most promising candidates and reserve the corridors. Identify the first willing property owner and build one connection to demonstrate the concept and test the permitting process in practice.



Reference image illustrating art and placemaking along the CKC.



Connection challenges in the SIS.

Key actions

- Map ideal future connections from the CKC to local amenities and interest points (schools, groceries, green spots, businesses) and explore integrating them into the future subarea plan and citywide connections map.
- Reserve connection corridors now, before development prevents them
- Plan and mark entry points along the CKC boundary Integrate signage with King County's Eastrail wayfinding plan.
- Design a safe crossing of the CKC and 112th
- Begin dialogue with Metro Transit on bus route integration
- Develp a transportation plan distinguishing truck-priority from pedestrian-priority zones

Scaling the concept

Start with one crossing. As the model is proven, extend the grid across the full SIS perimeter. Over time, incentivize properties to make connections to the CKC regardless of whether they are redeveloping. In the long term, explore bus route changes that make the CKC a true multi-modal spine.

Regulatory enablers

- Programmatic stream crossing permits - city pre-clears a replicable framework so individual property owners do not navigate the process from scratch
- Temporary use permits to allow early-stage connections to be tested before committing to permanent infrastructure
- A CKC access point toolbox providing a step-by-step city guide for bridge and crossing permits, with public-access as a condition
- The 2014 CKC Master Plan offers an existing framework that can inspire future policy and implementation tools
- A transportation plan to formalize truck vs. pedestrian zones

Who to involve - among others

- City of Kirkland (departments: Public Works, Planning, Parks)
- Property and building owners along the CKC boundary
- Metro Transit
- Green Kirkland Partnership
- Neighboring communities (Juanita, North Juanita, Highlands)

Points of attention

- The CKC's long-term future (trail vs. transit corridor) is unresolved – incremental access decisions may effectively decide this without a formal council vote
- The 2014 CKC Master Plan sets a long-term vision for the corridor, but does not on its own secure site-specific implementation
- Green Kirkland Partnership cannot operate on the CKC (Public Works-managed property), limiting restoration capacity
- Significant existing encroachments on the CKC need to be addressed before new connections are added
- Only property owners can authorize physical changes and should therefore be involved first, while having the support of tenants
- No dedicated city staff or budget currently exists for ecological restoration along the CKC



Reference image illustrating art and placemaking along the CKC.

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   Directly creates multi-modal links between the CKC and the SIS interior and surrounding neighborhoods via planned entry points and crossings.

2. **Experimental**
   Connections can be piloted one at a time – a single crossing tests the model before broader rollout.

3. **Rooted**
   Builds on existing informal paths and the CKC's established role; reserves corridors rather than imposing new infrastructure.

4. **Nature-based**
   Connections are designed around the creek, wetlands, and green corridors – using nature as the organizing logic.

5. **Collaborative**
   Requires property owners, the city, Metro Transit, and neighboring communities to coordinate on corridor reservations and safe crossings.

On housing
Establishing a pedestrian and bicycle grid now is a prerequisite for any future residential development. Reserving connection corridors before development occurs protects the infrastructure needed for a mixed-use, trail-oriented neighborhood. A transportation plan distinguishing truck-friendly from pedestrian-friendly zones also creates the spatial logic needed to introduce housing without conflict.


MAELSTROM BREWING

Concept 2
Treasure Mapping and Explorer Route







The SIS contains a remarkable variety of hidden gems – car collections, specialty manufacturers, food producers, sports facilities, unique buildings, notable trees, and wetlands – invisible to outsiders and even to neighboring businesses. The Treasure Map and Explorer Route makes these visible through a curated discovery route that pulls people off the CKC and into the district. Businesses that can't be found can't grow, and the area's distinct character can only be protected if people know it exists.

In Practice

Where to start

Identify 3–5 willing businesses, mark them with a visible "treasure" designation, and produce a simple printed or digital map. Run one open-day event where these businesses open their doors to CKC users. Use it to test the concept, gather feedback, and recruit the next wave of participants.



New townhouse development by Toll Brothers.



Maelstrom Brewing Company, a natural stop along the route.

Key actions

- Detect and map points of interest: special trees, viewpoints, wetlands, customer-facing businesses, notable buildings, artwork, and surrounding attractions
- Develop a "treasure" designation with clear, opt-in criteria (e.g., open your building, commission a mural, add greenery, host a market stall)
- Create a "treasure toolbox" – a practical guide for businesses on how to qualify and participate
- Design and communicate the exploration route with signs and names at each stop
- Invite businesses to join the route in phases and run pilots along it (pop-up events, open days)
- Add wildlife-sensitive lighting along the route
- Develop thematic sub-routes (food route, makers/construction route) as the area grows

Scaling the concept

Begin with a small cluster of treasures and a simple map. As more businesses join, develop thematic sub-routes that give the area a layered identity. Over time, the route becomes a recognized sub-district brand. The "treasure toolbox" criteria can evolve into a broader transformation incentive program, linking designation to facade improvements, green additions, and community programming.

Regulatory enablers

- Sign permits – current regulations may restrict sandwich boards and off-site signage; these need to be relaxed or pre-approved
- Property owner permission for facade markers and murals
- Temporary use permits for open-day events
- Coordination with King County's Eastrail wayfinding plan

Who to involve - among others

- Early "treasure" businesses (brewery, sports/tennis, gym, tortilla factory, food businesses)
- City of Kirkland (Planning Department, Kirkland Cultural Arts Commission (KCAC))
- Property owners (facade and signage permissions)
- Community champions within the SIS
- CKC trail users

Points of attention

- Not all businesses want more foot traffic – participation must remain genuinely opt-in
- Maps require ongoing maintenance as businesses change; a dynamic format is preferable
- The "treasure" designation needs clear, fair criteria to avoid perceptions of favoritism
- Safety perception along the CKC is a key barrier – the route must address this



Image illustrating a potential stop along the exploring route.

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   The route physically and visually links the CKC to the SIS interior and connects businesses to each other and to the surrounding community.

2. **Experimental**
   The route can start with a handful of willing businesses and grow organically; thematic sub-routes can be added over time.

3. **Rooted**
   Celebrates what is already there – existing businesses, buildings, trees, and industrial character – rather than replacing it.

4. **Nature-based**
   Highlights natural features (special trees, viewpoints, wetlands, Forbes Creek) and integrates wildlife-sensitive lighting.

5. **Collaborative**
   Businesses opt in, co-create the "treasure" criteria, and collectively own the identity of the route.

On housing
The route creates the walkable, interesting streetscape that makes a neighborhood attractive for residents. By establishing a pedestrian exploration culture and a recognizable district identity before housing arrives, the concept ensures future residents inherit a living neighborhood. The "treasure toolbox" criteria are equally applicable to mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial and upper-floor residential.



Concept 3
Wayfinding and Murals









Reference image, center right: Interactive art installation "On A Fence" in New York, NY, by Chat Travieso and Yeju Choi

The SIS is hard to find, hard to decipher from the outside, and visually disconnected from the CKC. Wayfinding and murals address this by giving the district a clear, distinctive visual identity, through signage, wall art, lighting, and branded infrastructure, that communicates the area's character and guides people in. Businesses like Crescent Lighting report that customers say "I didn't know you were here," and the area's industrial facades, while full of potential, currently appear as closed and unwelcoming.

In Practice

Where to start

Run an open call for a single mural on a CKC-facing facade – visible from the trail without requiring people to enter the SIS. Pair it with a community paint day to build local ownership. Use the KCAC as a connector and the Eastrail branding as a reference point.



Reference: Exterior identity signage at R. House, Baltimore, MD, by Younts Design



Reference: Wayfinding sign at Grand Junction Plaza, Westfield, IN, designed by Bruce Mau Design

Key actions

- Launch an open call for art and branding proposals targeting students, summer camps, and local artists
- Apply art and branding to existing infrastructure: utility boxes, crosswalks, light poles, building facades
- Develop a wall mural concept within the intersection of nature and industry theme
- Establish an exploration route with QR codes, geocaching, and digital wayfinding (Treasure Mapping and Explorer Route)
- Invite local artists for residencies in vacant buildings
- Use wildlife-sensitive lighting to guide pedestrians into the area
- Integrate the wayfinding system with King County's Eastrail plan and Eastrail branding

Scaling the concept

Start with one mural and one set of wayfinding signs. As the visual identity takes hold, expand to cover key intersections, the full exploration route, and eventually a coherent district brand: a logo, color palette, and name that businesses can use on their products and storefronts (Community and Identity). In the long term, the SIS branding can serve as a pilot model for other Kirkland neighborhoods.

Regulatory enablers

- Property owner permission for murals; critical area assessment near Forbes Creek
- Sign permit revisions or interpretations to allow sandwich boards and directional signage
- Coordination with King County on wayfinding integration
- Wildlife impact assessment for lighting installations

Who to involve - among others

- KCAC
- Property owners (mural permissions)
- LWTech (art/design and horticulture programs)
- Local schools and summer camps
- SIS businesses with CKC-facing facades
- King County Parks

Points of attention

- Not all businesses want an "art" identity – some industrial operators may find it at odds with their client base
- Long-term maintenance of murals is unresolved – needs a stewardship plan from the outset
- Lighting must be carefully designed to avoid disturbing wildlife using the CKC as a movement corridor
- Murals near Forbes Creek require assessment for critical area and, if relevant, paint runoff impacts
- Wayfinding must be integrated with King County's existing plan to avoid duplication or conflict



A mural on a warehouse wall in Refshaleøen, Copenhagen that became the centerpiece of a new neighbourhood identity. Illustration: Cobe

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   Wayfinding guides people from the CKC into the SIS and between businesses; CKC-facing murals make the area visible without requiring people to leave the trail.

2. **Experimental**
   Art can be piloted at small scale – one mural, one utility box, one set of signs – and expanded based on what works.

3. **Rooted**
   Uses existing infrastructure (utility boxes, light poles, crosswalks, facades) and draws on the area's identity at the intersection of nature and industry.

4. **Nature-based**
   The "nature vs. industry" theme runs through the mural concept; lighting is designed to avoid disturbing wildlife using the CKC corridor at night.

5. **Collaborative**
   Open calls to artists, students, and summer camps; businesses and property owners co-create the identity rather than having it imposed.

On housing
A visually coherent, welcoming streetscape is a precondition for new residential uses. The mixed-use identity component – where facades are designed to be transparent and inviting – directly supports the integration of housing into the existing fabric. Incentives for creative facade design (e.g., inclusion on the exploration route) can be extended to mixed-use buildings.



Concept 4
Unsealing Surfaces









Large reference image, left: FR8scape in Denver, transformed by Groundworks Design

The SIS is heavily paved – parking lots, driveways, and hardstand cover most of the ground between buildings. This concept proposes breaking up underused asphalt and concrete, planting native species in the openings, and reusing all excavated materials on-site as benches, landscape features, and layered biotopes. The result is a distinctive industrial landscape that unites industry and nature, increases biodiversity, and creates new public spaces between buildings. The area's impervious surfaces are both an environmental liability and an untapped design opportunity – the "scruffy" aesthetic is an asset, not a problem.

In Practice

Where to start

Identify one parking lot with demonstrably low utilization, ideally near the CKC or a future connection point, and partner with a willing property owner to break a small section of asphalt, plant native species, and stack the concrete as a seating feature. Document the process and costs to build the case for replication.



Underused parking areas as potential pilot sites for unsealing surfaces.



Unsealing surfaces. Image by Jason Zeis.

Key actions

- Break asphalt and concrete surfaces in underused areas, starting with low-utilization parking lots
- Plant native species in cracks and openings; stack and reuse concrete slabs as benches and landscape elements
- Excavate to different levels to reveal gravel, sand, and soil layers; plant different biotopes at each level
- Develop a shared material re-use program for unpaving across multiple sites
- Install place-based educational signage at each intervention

Scaling the concept

Start with one pilot site. Develop a shared material re-use program that allows concrete and asphalt from one site to be repurposed at another. Over time, the unsealing grid extends across the SIS, creating a network of green corridors. In the long term, incentivize new development to contribute to the green grid as a standard condition of approval, and extend it vertically through green roofs and facade greening on existing warehouse buildings.

Regulatory enablers

- Temporary use permits for pilot interventions in parking areas
- Shared parking agreements to demonstrate that fewer dedicated spaces are needed
- Potential zoning incentive: height bonus for property owners who contribute to the green grid
- Explore potential regulatory and other incentives for removing impervious surfaces

Who to involve - among others

- Property and building owners (essential as physical changes require their consent)
- City of Kirkland (departments: Planning, Public Works)
- LWTech Horticulture program (plant selection, ongoing stewardship)
- Green Kirkland Partnership (nature restoration expertise)

Points of attention

- Physical changes require the consent of building owners, not tenants, so engagement must reach owners
- Not all parking can be removed; a utilization study is needed before any spaces are repurposed
- The intervention must account for land that is needed for future infill and redevelopment
- Stormwater implications of unsealing near Forbes Creek need careful assessment



Image by Kateryna Hliznitsova.

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   Unsealed surfaces create new pathways and stopping points between buildings and toward the CKC; broken surfaces can serve as wayfinding devices leading down to the trail.

2. **Experimental**
   A single parking lot can be the first test – the approach is inherently incremental and reversible.

3. **Rooted**
   Reuses concrete slabs as benches, reveals the soil and gravel layers beneath, and celebrates the industrial-natural interface rather than erasing it.

4. **Nature-based**
   Directly increases biodiversity by creating planting zones, revealing underground layers, and establishing green corridors between buildings.

5. **Collaborative**
   Requires property owners to participate; a shared material re-use program can span multiple sites.

On housing
Unsealing surfaces creates the green, walkable public realm that makes a neighborhood livable for residents. By transforming parking lots into landscape features, the concept also challenges the assumption that every space must be reserved for cars – freeing up land that could, over time, support new uses including housing. A height bonus for property owners who contribute to the green grid could directly incentivize mixed-use development above ground-floor industrial uses.


IBM
Fax &
opiers

Concept 5
The Generator



Front Yard, a student-driven culture garden at the Aarhus School of Architecture, designed with Forum Arkitekter. A neglected backside transformed into a vibrant, biodiverse gathering space, built by over 100 students through open workshops and co-creation. Photo: Aarhus School of Architecture

The Generator is both a physical place and a method. As a physical space – anchored by a building called "the Generator" – it is a testbed where experiments happen, businesses develop, products are sold, and guests gather. Possible programming includes nature-based services, social gatherings, a farmers market, food trucks, and practical community activities like bike repair. It is also a space for connection: knowing your neighbours, understanding their hopes and resources, and opening up the possibilities that come from that knowledge. As a method, it is the practice of piloting, testing, and scaling. Every activity in the Generator is an experiment, where you start small, locate what works and make it grow.

In Practice

Where to start

Host a single food truck event or farmers market. Use the event to test who shows up, identify businesses that want to be involved in the Generator concept, and learn what the community wants more of. The event itself is the first experiment.



Potential Generator building



Reference: Farmers market, image by Ashley Winkler.

Key actions

- Identify and secure a suitable Generator building – visible from both the CKC and the road, flexible warehouse typology, not locked into a single use
- Host a farmers market or food truck event as the first activation
- Create space for practical, hands-on activities: bike repair, shared tools, product testing
- Establish a regular program of activities open to all businesses and visitors
- Develop nature-based services as part of the programming
- Use the Generator as the pilot site for the warehouse transformation guide (The Warehouse)
- Establish it as a permanent home for rotating temporary projects – experiments start here before graduating to permanent locations elsewhere

Scaling the concept

Start with events, no building needed. As the community of practice grows, secure a Generator building - could be one of the area's vacant buildings. Use it first for pop-ups and temporary programming, then develop it into a permanent space with food, maker, nature-based, and community uses. In the long term, residential or office space can be added above to become a model for mixed-use warehouse transformation (The Warehouse).

Regulatory enablers

- Temporary use permits for events in parking areas and rights-of-way
- Area-wide alcohol permit for events
- Health and food production permits for commissary and food truck activities
- Flexibility of use designation for the Generator building to allow it to evolve over time

Who to involve - among others

- Anchor businesses willing to host early events
- Existing commissary kitchen businesses (~12 food businesses already sharing kitchen space)
- City of Kirkland (Planning Department, Economic Development)
- LWTech (horticulture, food programs)
- Hopelink and other NGOs already present with volunteer networks

Points of attention

- The Generator needs a named champion – without someone personally pushing for the first events, it will not start
- Some businesses do not want more foot traffic – the Generator must be positioned as opt-in and business-beneficial
- If a temporary activation becomes beloved, removing it creates community conflict – the rotating temporary project model is designed to avoid this, but needs to be communicated clearly from the start
- Building acquisition is a significant commitment – demonstrate value through events before taking that step



AI-generated reference image illustrating how The Generator could activate a warehouse edge through open studio activities, workshops and informal gatherings.

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   The Generator is a physical node connecting businesses to each other, to the CKC, and to the broader community.

2. **Experimental**
   Every activity is a pilot, and the building itself demonstrates what warehouse transformation can look like.

3. **Rooted**
   Housed in an existing warehouse, celebrating the typology rather than replacing it; activities build on what is already present in the area.

4. **Nature-based**
   The Generator can host nature-based programming, and its surrounding surfaces can be among the first to be unsealed.

5. **Collaborative**
   Explicitly a space for connection – business gatherings, shared stories, issues addressed together.

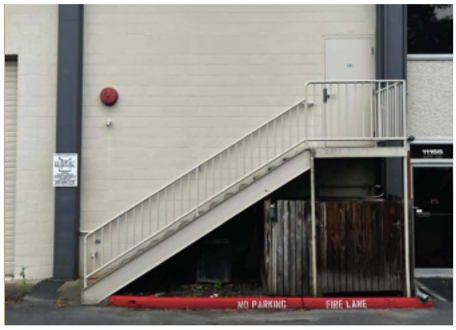
On housing
The Generator building is a pilot for warehouse transformation, including mixed use. The long-term vision explicitly includes live/work or residential space on upper floors. By demonstrating that a warehouse can become a vibrant multi-use space without losing its industrial character, the Generator makes the case for housing integration across the district. It also builds the community connections and neighbourhood character that make housing integration easier.


4

Concept 6
The Warehouse









Most buildings in the SIS are column-beam warehouse structures from the 1960s–1980s – structurally flexible, embodied-carbon-rich, and capable of accommodating a wide range of uses. Yet most owners navigate building transformation on their own, without shared knowledge of what is possible. This concept creates a transformation guide for the warehouse typology, pilots it on one building (the Generator), and develops a framework for local plans.

The warehouse is the defining building type of the SIS, and its adaptive reuse, rather than demolition and replacement, is the key to preserving the area's character, affordability, and industrial heritage while enabling new uses, including housing. The column-beam structure is well-suited to mixed-use conversion: living above commercial, co-living, or live/work arrangements are all feasible within the existing typology, and a height bonus (permission to build higher than standard zoning limits) for owners who retain existing structures and add residential floors could make this financially viable. DERU, a market and eatery in a transformed warehouse space in Kirkland, is a local example of what the typology can become when it is opened up to new uses

In Practice

Where to start

Commission a concise warehouse typology guide showing what the standard column-beam warehouse can become across phases – from simple facade interventions to mixed-use conversion with residential above. Share it with building owners as a conversation starter. Simultaneously, identify the Generator building as the pilot site and begin the structural audit.



Illustration showing how existing warehouse typologies could be adapted over time with new floors, mixed-use programmes and more active ground floors.

Key actions

- Develop a transformation guide for column-beam warehouse structures – a practical, visual document showing what is possible across phases (facade interventions, opening facades, adding floors, mixed-use conversion)
- Include housing typologies explicitly in the guide – showing owners what is structurally feasible and what a height bonus could make financially viable
- Pilot the guide on the Generator building and use it as a live demonstration
- Conduct structural audits and CO2 calculations for the pilot building to build the regulatory case
- Develop a framework for local plans that gives individual owners a clear pathway
- Share the guide with all SIS building owners

Scaling the concept

The pilot on the Generator building produces a documented case study. The guide is refined and distributed to all SIS building owners. Over time, it becomes a standard reference for the sub-area planning process, and the framework for local plans embeds it into the regulatory baseline. As more buildings are transformed, the SIS develops a portfolio of adaptive reuse precedents that can inform citywide and regional policy.

Regulatory enablers

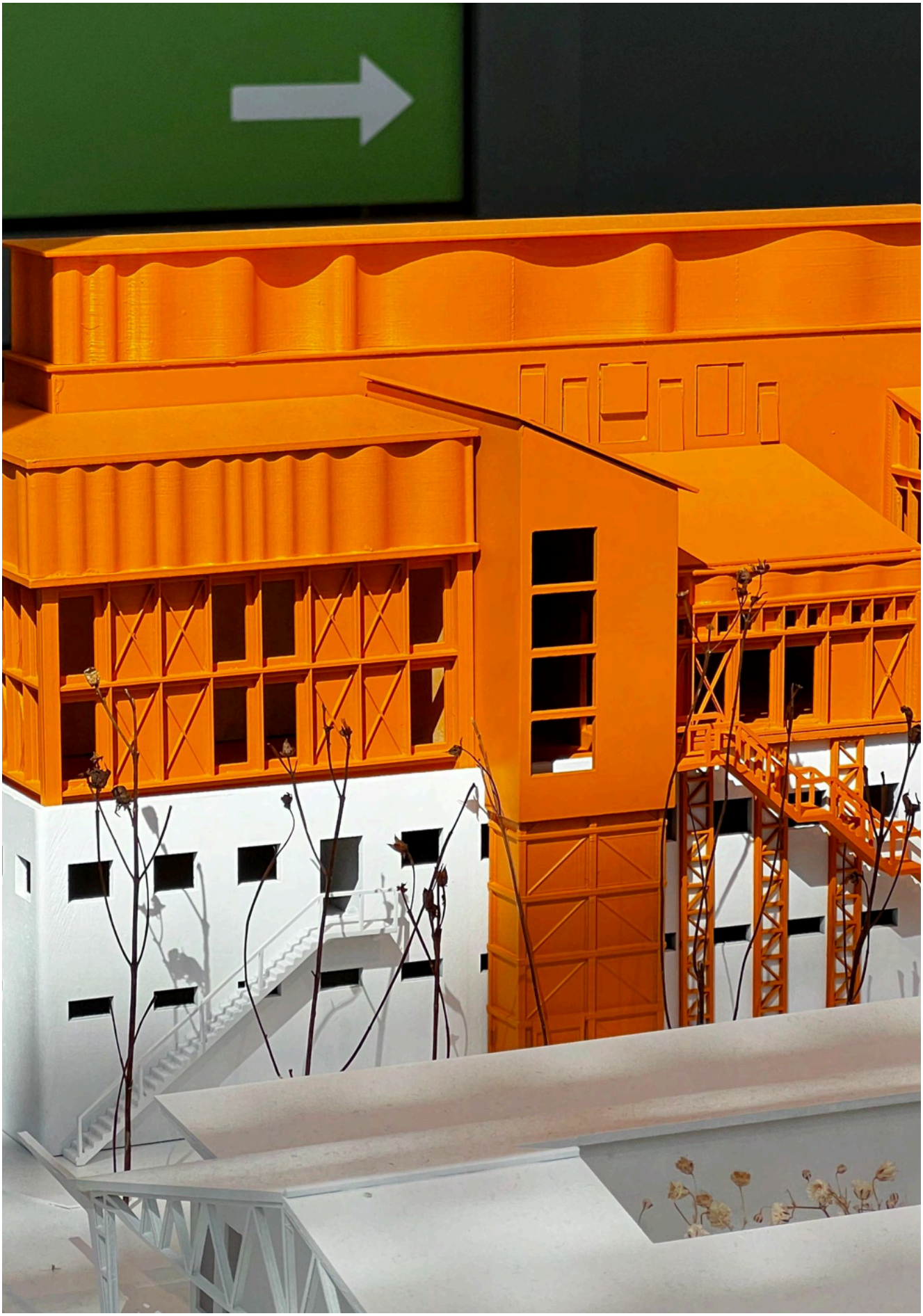
- Framework for local plans accommodating mixed use within existing warehouse structures
- Height bonus for owners who retain existing structures and add residential or mixed-use floors
- Pre-approved permit pathways for common interventions (wall painting, facade opening, new bridges)
- Structural audit and CO2 calculation requirements to support regulatory flexibility

Who to involve - among others

- Building and property owners in the SIS (primary audience for the guide)
- City of Kirkland (Planning Department – framework for local plans)
- Structural engineers and architects
- Developers (for later-stage mixed-use conversion)

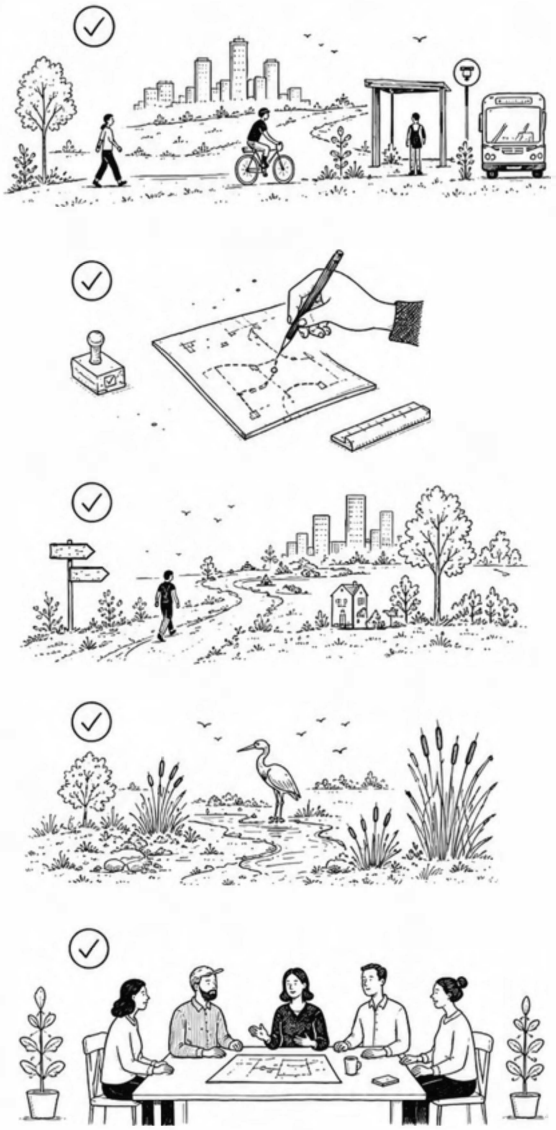
Points of attention

- The guide must be designed for building owners, not renters – they have very different stakes
- Rising rents are the primary fear of SIS businesses; transformation that increases property values risks displacement – anti-displacement mechanisms must be built in from the start
- Introducing residential uses requires careful mitigation of industrial nuisances (air pollution, noise, and truck traffic)
- Adaptive reuse financing is harder because lenders are unfamiliar with the model – developer education and exploration of feasible incentive tools are needed
- Contractors are accustomed to demolishing, not carefully deconstructing – the pilot must include contractor engagement from the outset



Architectural model for a new development in a historic harbour district in Copenhagen, designed to adapt to the area's composition. Model by Lauge Floris

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   A shared guide connects building owners to each other and to a common knowledge base; the pilot building becomes a visible demonstration for the whole district.

2. **Experimental**
   The pilot on the Generator building tests the guide in practice before broader application.

3. **Rooted**
   Explicitly about preserving and building on what is already there – retaining structures, celebrating the column-beam typology, avoiding tabula rasa redevelopment.

4. **Nature-based**
   The guide can include green roof options, facade greening, and unsealing of surrounding surfaces as part of the transformation toolkit.

5. **Collaborative**
   Developed with and for building owners; the pilot is a shared learning exercise.

On housing
The column-beam warehouse structure is well-suited to mixed-use conversion – living above commercial, co-living, or live/work arrangements. The workshops discussed a height bonus for owners who retain existing structures and create mixed use, directly incentivizing residential addition. The transformation guide can include housing typologies as one of the possible uses. Danish projects, such as 3XN GXN's Quay Quarter Tower skyscraper in Sydney, Australia, which retained existing structures while adding floors, demonstrates that regulators can stretch limits when the structural and CO2 homework is done.


ULINE
BUBBLE BAGS
ULINE
FOAM POUCHES

Concept 7
Regulatory Toolbox

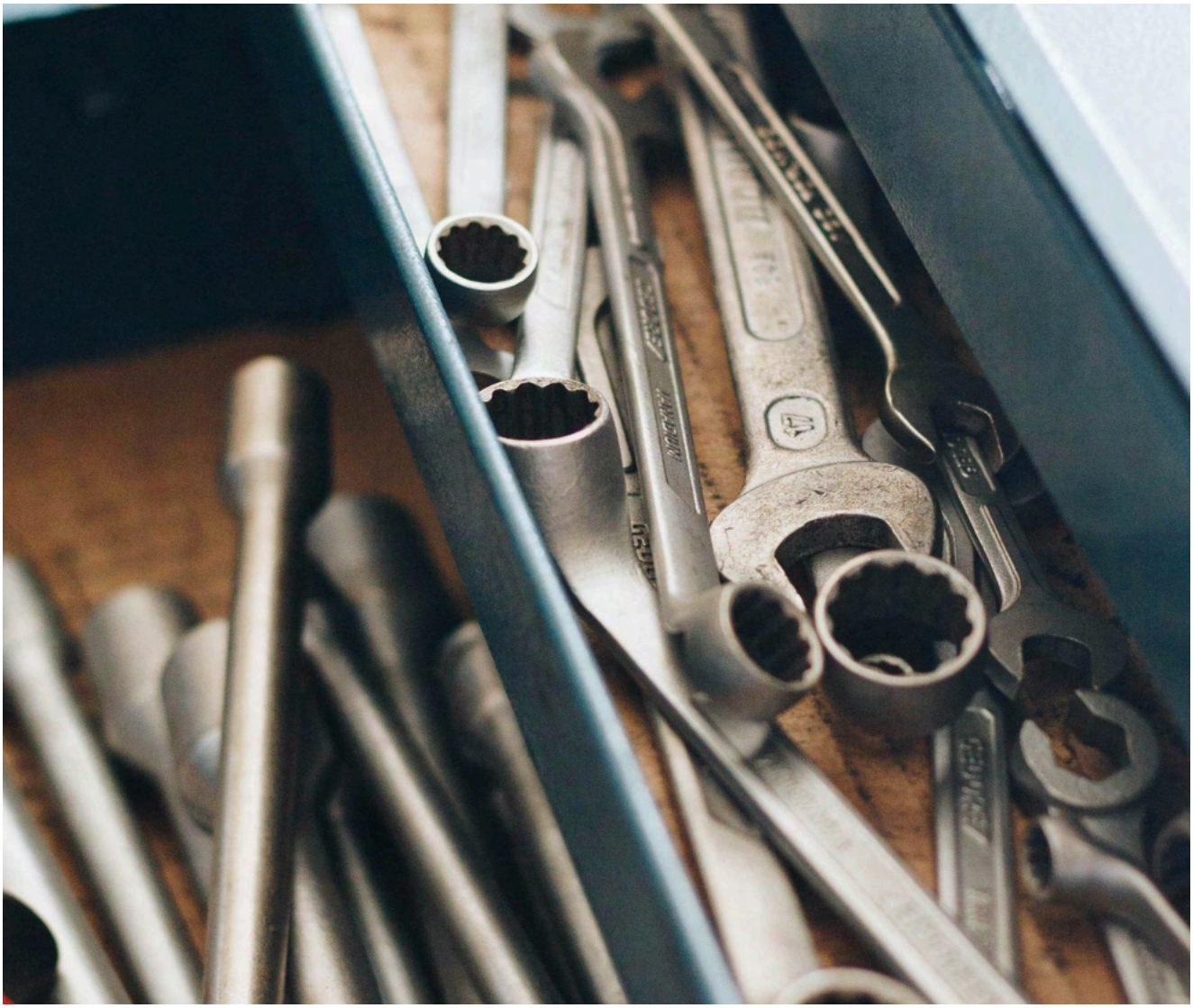


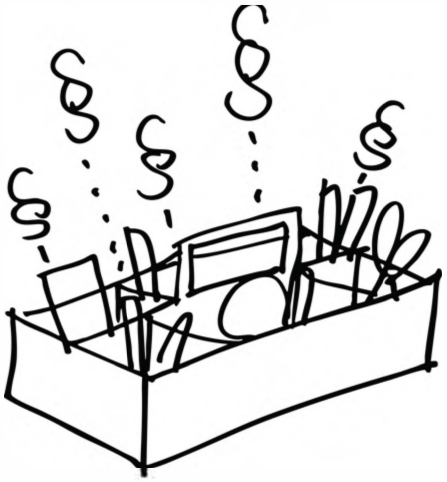
Image by Isabela Kronemberger

Many of the physical changes that would benefit the SIS, such as a mural on a building, a path to the CKC, a food truck on the street, a bridge over a stream, are technically possible but practically blocked by slow or fragmented permitting. The Regulatory Toolbox addresses this by having the City pre-describe solutions and pre-prepare permits for the most common interventions, so businesses and property owners can act without navigating the full regulatory process from scratch. Removing this friction is one of the highest-leverage things the City can do to enable all the other concepts.

In Practice

Where to start

Identify the highest-priority permits – the most requested by SIS stakeholders (likely signage or temporary use) and those that most directly advance the City's objectives, such as CKC access points. Develop pre-approved templates for these first, distribute them, and track uptake. Use the response to prioritize the next permits in the toolbox.



The Regulatory Toolbox as a practical set of guides for permits, access points and temporary interventions.

Key actions

- Develop a stream crossing permit guide, building on the existing precedent where the City permitted a bridge with a public-access requirement as a condition
- Create pre-approved sign permits covering sandwich boards, directional signage, and off-site signage
- Develop temporary use permits for food trucks, pop-ups, and events in parking areas and rights-of-way
- Create an area-wide alcohol permit framework for events
- Develop a goat-clearing service permit or equivalent vegetation management framework
- Package all permits into a single, accessible toolbox for SIS businesses and property owners

Scaling the concept

Start with the highest-priority permits and expand as the toolbox is tested and refined through real projects. Over time it becomes a living document embedded in the sub-area planning process – and a model for other Kirkland neighborhoods and Pacific Northwest cities facing similar transformation challenges.

Regulatory enablers

- A city decision to develop pre-approved permit pathways for the SIS as part of the sub-area planning process
- Internal coordination across Planning, Public Works, Parks, and the King County Health Department
- Public-access requirement as a condition for CKC crossing permits (already established as precedent)
- City Attorney review of pre-approval frameworks
- Simplification of the current zoning framework

Who to involve - among others

- City of Kirkland (departments: Planning, Public Works, Parks)
- King County Health Department
- SIS businesses and property owners (to identify the most critical barriers)
- City Attorney

Points of attention

- Without a dedicated City owner, the toolbox risks being produced but not maintained
- Pre-approved permits must still meet all legal and environmental requirements – shortcuts that create liability will undermine trust in the whole concept
- The CKC's unresolved long-term future as a potential transit corridor creates uncertainty for crossing permits; conditional language may be needed pending future regional transit decisions
- Businesses that are renters cannot authorize physical changes – the toolbox must reach building owners, not just tenants



Trail access signage showing the type of intervention that could be standardised through the Regulatory Toolbox.

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   Pre-approved crossing and bridge permits directly enable physical connections to the CKC.

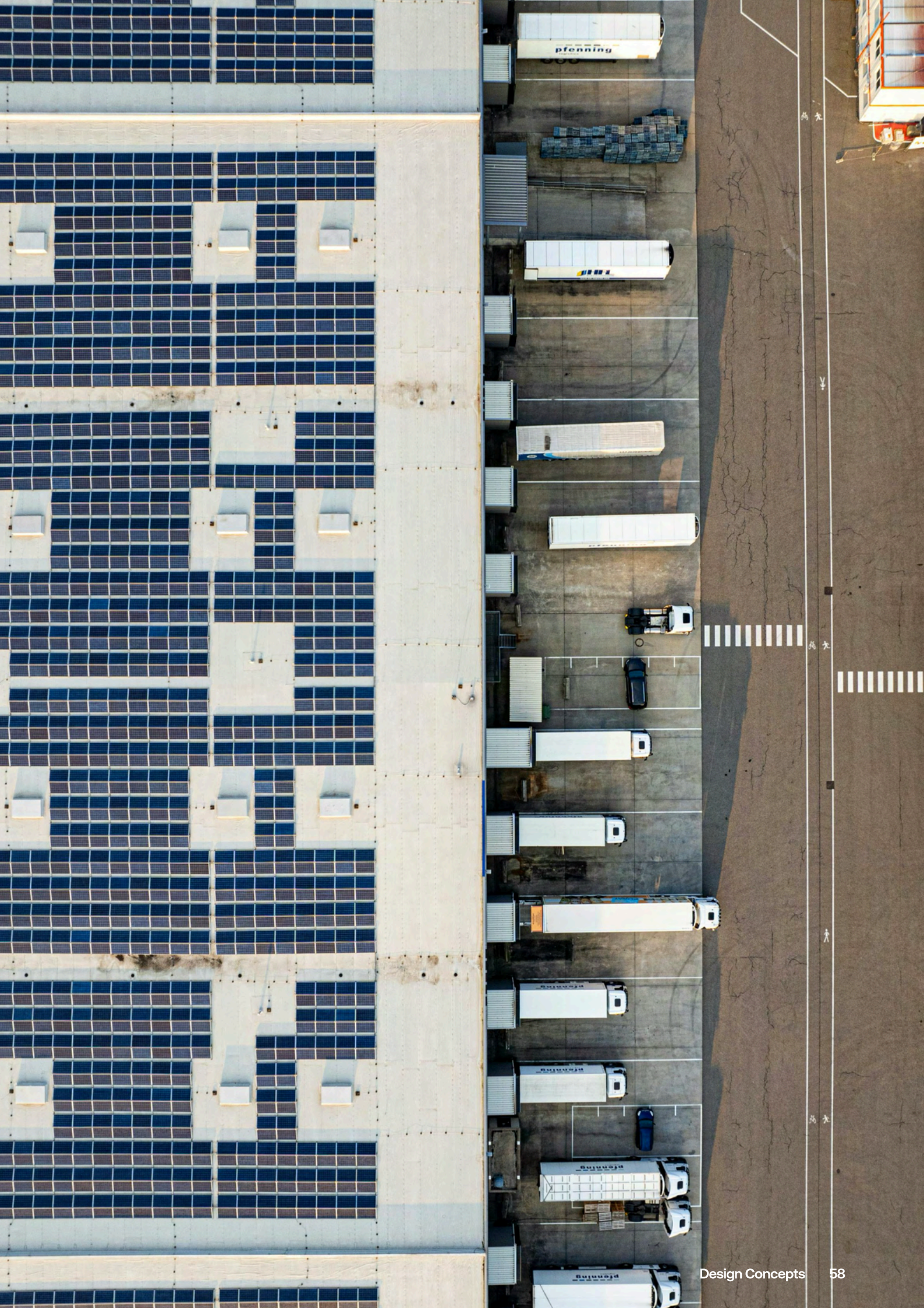
2. **Experimental**
   Pre-cleared permits lower the barrier to running pilots quickly and cheaply across all other concepts.

3. **Rooted**
   Works within existing structures and regulations – making incremental change easier rather than requiring wholesale policy reform.

4. **Nature-based**
   Stream crossing permit guides and vegetation management frameworks protect Forbes Creek while enabling access.

5. **Collaborative**
   Developed in partnership with SIS stakeholders based on the actual barriers they face – a product of the relationship, not imposed from above.

On housing
Pre-approved pathways for mixed-use warehouse conversion – structural interventions, facade changes, addition of residential floors – directly lower the barrier for building owners who want to add housing. A height bonus framework, pre-cleared as part of the toolbox, can make it financially viable to retain existing structures and build residential uses above. The toolbox also enables the broader conditions, such as pedestrian connections, CKC access, wayfinding, and neighborhood activation, that make the area attractive to future residents.


pfenning

Concept 8
The Forum



AI-generated visualisation for illustrative purposes.

The Forum is the voice of the area – a formal or informal entity representing the interests of businesses and citizens in conversations with each other and with the City. It builds on the sporadic informal communication that already exists and on the connections that the Generator helps strengthen, formalizing them into a structure that can arrange gatherings and serve as a consistent entry point for City engagement. Though some businesses in the SIS feel part of a community, others are deeply siloed from each other and are not aware of neighboring businesses. Without a Forum, the area has no collective voice and no mechanism to shape its own future.

In Practice

Where to start

Host one "business beer night" at Maelstrom Brewing – free beer, no agenda beyond meeting your neighbor. Personally invite 10 businesses. The goal is not a program; it is a room full of people who have never spoken to each other. From that room, recruit the founding group for the Forum.



Illustrations showing how The Forum could begin through informal gatherings, local exchange and community dialogue.

Key actions

- Identify 5–10 business owners willing to commit to the first four gatherings – this is the founding act
- Use a theme-host model: each gathering has a topic and a rotating host who takes responsibility for that event
- Start with the lowest possible barrier: "come meet your neighbor" or "come see your neighbor's space"
- Introduce low-barrier event formats: brainstorming night, bring-a-friend night, monthly city rep drop-in (possibly hosted in the Generator building (The Generator))
- Locate or activate a shared digital channel – an existing Facebook group was identified but is largely unknown to businesses
- Before the Forum launches, clarify the form and degree of the City's involvement
- Over time, develop the Forum into a formal business association with standing in planning processes

Scaling the concept

Start with informal gatherings. As trust builds, develop a light structure: a shared digital channel, a rotating host model, an events calendar. Over time, formalize into a business association with capacity to apply for grants, commission studies, and represent the SIS in the sub-area planning process – the institution that ensures the area retains its identity and voice as it transforms.

Regulatory enablers

- The Forum itself requires no regulatory change. It becomes more powerful when paired with:
  - Recognized business association status, giving it more collective power
  - City support for outreach (not organizing, but showing up and being available)
  - Connection to the Chamber of Commerce or other formal body as an informal liaison

Who to involve - among others

- Business champions within the SIS – the founding group who commit to the first four events
- Maelstrom Brewing and other anchor businesses willing to host
- City of Kirkland (Economic Development – for outreach support and the monthly drop-in presence)
- Kirkland Chamber of Commerce
- NGOs and community organizations already present: Hopelink, Toys for Kids, Green Kirkland volunteers
- Neighboring community associations (Juanita, North Juanita, Highlands)

Points of attention

- The Forum's success depends entirely on the energy of its founding champions – it requires a dedicated frontrunner, not a committee
- Renters and owners have different stakes; the Forum must represent both, but their interests will sometimes diverge on rent and displacement
- The City's role needs careful calibration – being seen as running the Forum will undermine its credibility as an independent business voice
- The existing Facebook group is largely inactive – the Forum must decide whether to revive it or start fresh
- Competing business interests may limit participation – the Forum must be built around shared interests (visibility, safety, city engagement) rather than commercial collaboration



Maelstrom Brewing Company, a potential venue for the first business beer night, bringing neighboring businesses together as a starting point for the Forum

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   The Forum is the connective tissue of the district – linking businesses to each other, to residents, and to the City.

2. **Experimental**
   Each gathering format (coffee morning, pitch night, brainstorming session) is a small experiment in what works for this community.

3. **Rooted**
   Builds on existing informal practices and communication channels rather than creating something from scratch.

4. **Nature-based**
   The Forum can organize community clean-up events and green stewardship days – the organizational vehicle through which the community takes ownership of natural assets.

5. **Collaborative**
   The Forum is the collaborative principle – the structure through which relationships are built and maintained over time.

On housing
As housing is introduced, the Forum ensures future residents have a voice alongside businesses, and that the two communities develop a shared identity rather than competing interests. It also serves as the entry point for conversations with the City about housing-related concerns – displacement, affordability, parking – so business owners feel heard rather than steamrolled.



Concept 9
Community and Identity (Goat Town)









A goat tower in Illinois, US. Photo: Chris Schoonover

The SIS has no name that its businesses, residents, or visitors recognize or feel ownership of. "SIS" is only a planning placeholder, not a community identity. This concept aims at changing that by giving the area a real name and a distinct identity, developed through a community-led process that lets the identity emerge from the people already there. Identity cannot be designed from the outside – it has to be sparked. At the first workshop, the idea of bringing goats to clear blackberry and invasive vegetation along the CKC generated more energy and imagination than almost any other idea. Not because goats are the point, but because the image is unexpected, hands-on, and rooted in nature – the kind of thing that makes people stop, laugh, and ask: what is happening here? The catalyst could equally be a community mural day, a naming festival, or a neighborhood open house. What matters is that it is vivid enough to get people talking and participatory enough to give them ownership of what comes next.

In Practice

Where to start

Organize the catalyzing event. It should require minimal budget, generate maximum attention, and be inherently photogenic and shareable. Use it as a community gathering moment – invite businesses, neighbors, city staff, and media. At the event, run an informal naming exercise: "what would you call this place?" Use the responses as the starting point for the naming process.





Picture by Mi Yo.

Key actions

- Organize an identifying and catalyzing event along the CKC as the first place-making activation – use it to generate attention and community energy
- Run a community naming process, drawing on name suggestions from Workshop 1 participants (see examples on page 70) and the broader community; test candidates through events before formalizing
- Develop a brand and logo in parallel with the art and wayfinding open call (Wayfinding and Murals) – identity and visual language should develop together
- Use the Eastrail branding as a reference point and potential integration opportunity
- Apply the name and identity to products, storefronts, and infrastructure – give businesses something they can put on their packaging and feel proud of

Scaling the concept

Start with the identifying and catalyzing event and a naming process. As the name takes hold, develop a full visual identity – logo, color palette, typography – that businesses can apply to their storefronts and products. Over time, the identity becomes the organizing framework for all public-facing communication about the area, from wayfinding signs to planning documents. In the long term, the SIS identity concept can serve as a model for branding other Kirkland neighborhoods undergoing transformation.

Regulatory enablers

- Temporary use permit for the event (covered by the Regulatory Toolbox)
- If goat-clearing event: Vegetation management coordination with Public Works – the CKC is Public Works property; goats cannot operate there without permission
- Property owner permission for any branding or signage applied to buildings or facades
- Coordination with King County on integrating the area's identity into the Eastrail wayfinding plan
- A potential new name for the area is part of the 2044 Kirkland Comprehensive Plan Subarea Plan analysis

Points of attention

- A name imposed from outside – or chosen by a small group – will not stick; the process must be genuinely inclusive and patient
- The CKC's unresolved long-term future means that any identity built around it as a "living spine" carries some risk if its use changes
- Not all businesses want a public-facing identity – some industrial operators may find it at odds with their client base; participation in branding must remain opt-in
- If goat event: Goats eat native plants as well as invasives – the event must be carefully scoped and managed to avoid damaging the natural assets it is meant to celebrate; coyote presence in the Juanita Bay area also requires a safety plan

Who to involve - among others

- SIS businesses and property owners (the identity must be co-created with them, not for them)
- City of Kirkland (Planning Department, Economic Development, KCAC)
- Green Kirkland Partnership (for a possible goat event and ongoing nature stewardship)
- King County Parks (Eastrail wayfinding integration)
- Local artists, students, and summer camps (for the brand and logo open call)
- Neighboring communities – Juanita, North Juanita, Finn Hill – whose Scandinavian heritage resonates with the Nordic design approach being applied



Picture of Juanita Beach Park Bathhouse in Kirkland, Washington

Meeting the principles



1. **Connected**
   A shared name and identity connects businesses, residents, and visitors to a common sense of place – the symbolic infrastructure that makes all physical connections meaningful.

2. **Experimental**
   Identity can be tested through events before it is fixed – a goat-clearing day, a naming contest, a "what are we?" gathering are all low-cost experiments in what resonates.

3. **Rooted**
   The name must come from what is already there – the industrial heritage, the natural assets, the specific businesses and people who make the area distinctive.

4. **Nature-based**
   A goat event would be literally nature-based; the identity is rooted in the area's unique position at the intersection of industry and nature.

5. **Collaborative**
   The naming process requires businesses, residents, and the City to agree on something together – which is itself a community-building act.

On housing
A strong neighborhood identity is a precondition for successful housing integration. Future residents choose neighborhoods partly based on character and belonging – a named, legible district is more attractive and more stable than an anonymous warehouse zone. As housing arrives, the name and identity ensure new residents are integrated into an existing community narrative rather than displacing it.

Naming ideas

The name must go hand-in-hand with the distinct identity developed by the community. The following examples were generated by participants at Workshop 1 to inspire the naming process:

01
Kirkland Connect District

02
Community Innovation District

03
MAP District: Makers in Play

04
Totem Trade and Innovation District

05
The Design Center

06
The Weird Industrial District

07
The Trade District

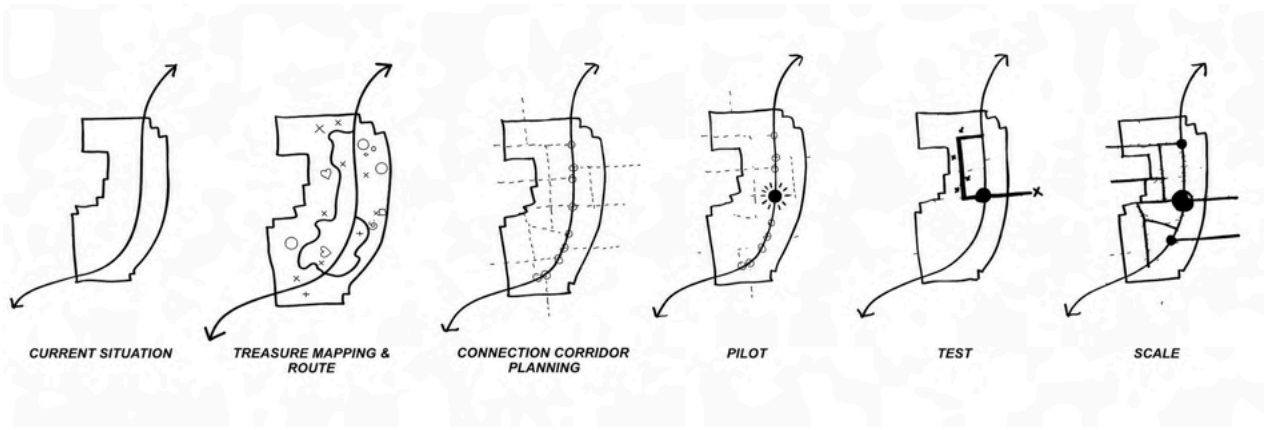
08
Goat Town

09
Goat District

10
The Goat



Phased approach



The nine concepts can be started in any order, but each one creates conditions that make the others more possible. Rather than a single master plan, the strategy is to open up the area gradually through small steps: start with mapping and lightweight experiments, learn from what works, and move toward larger and more permanent changes over time.

The Forum has already started: informal networks already exist among some businesses. The next step is simply to give them a regular meeting point (physical, digital, or both) that businesses and stakeholders can build on.

The diagram above illustrates how the other concepts can build on each other over time.

Current situation
The area is active but disconnected – the CKC runs through it but does not connect well to either side and the area's assets remain hidden.

Treasure mapping & route
Surface what already exists. Open select businesses and spaces to visitors on specific dates. Begin building a discovery route into and through the area.

Treasure mapping & route
Surface what already exists. Open select businesses and spaces to visitors on specific dates. Begin building a discovery route into and through the area.

Connection corridor planning
Use the knowledge gained from mapping to identify and reserve future connection corridors before development prevents them. Develop the Regulatory Toolbox and permitting framework with the City.

Pilot
Test physical interventions at specific locations: asphalt cuts with planted layers, shared parking activation, wayfinding elements, and facade identity work. Each pilot is low-cost and reversible.

Test
Evaluate what the pilots reveal about how the space is used, what attracts people, and what the community wants more of. Refine the approach and prioritize the next moves based on evidence.

Scale
Expand successful interventions across the wider area. By this stage, the community forum, the route, the identity framework, and the physical pilots have together created a foundation for more significant and lasting transformation.

The end state is left open. The goal of the phasing is not to determine what the SIS will become, but to create the conditions – physical, social, and institutional – from which the area can shape its own future.



03

Moving Forward

What Now?

The nine concepts presented here are not a master plan, but a starting point. The workshop process has produced a shared direction, a set of guiding principles, and a catalogue of ideas, shaped by the people that know the SIS area best. The following are recommended steps to build the conditions needed to move from ideas to action.

Fill in the Knowledge Gaps

Before committing resources to specific interventions, the City needs a clearer picture of the area's conditions. Several assumptions behind the concepts still need to be tested with data.

Traffic

Is the experience of heavy traffic a real barrier, or partly a perception? Collect baseline data on pedestrian counts, truck movements, and children crossing the street – this will inform both the connection grid and the case for pedestrian-priority zones.

Parking

How many parking spaces exist in the area, and how are they actually used across different times of day? Utilization data is needed before any spaces are removed or repurposed.

High impact uses

Map businesses that generate noise, pollution, or traffic hazards. Understanding where the genuine conflicts are will help zone the area into sub-areas – "activated" vs. "industrial" – rather than applying a uniform approach.

Ownership

Map who owns what – buildings, land, the trail, the roads, and any other city-controlled assets. Knowing who has the authority to act is a prerequisite for any physical change. Distinguish between building owners and business tenants, whose interests and capacities differ significantly.

Vacant buildings

Identify empty or underused buildings in the area, and assess how they could support the nine concepts. Vacant buildings are often the fastest entry point, since they typically involve fewer stakeholders, more flexibility, lower cost.

Future of housing

What amount and type of housing is appropriate for the area? Further consideration is needed to understand how housing could fit within the area's industrial role, existing uses, and long-term development trajectory.

From strategic direction to first implementation steps

Identify Potential First Movers

Not everyone in the SIS is ready to act, and that is to be expected. The concepts in this report do not require full participation from the beginning. What they require is a smaller group of willing first movers who can test ideas, build momentum and demonstrate what is possible. The workshop process has already pointed to several potential champions: businesses open to hosting events or activating their spaces, property owners interested in transformation or mixed-use development, and community members and organizations already active in the area. This includes Green Kirkland Partnership volunteers, Hopelink and other NGOs with volunteer networks. The City should begin by mapping who is ready to take action and start there, with a short follow-up engagement with workshop participants as a natural first step.

Take Action

The most important thing now is to make progress visible. Small, concrete actions can build trust, create momentum and show that the direction set through this process is beginning to move into practice. Early steps could include designating one willing business as the first "treasure" with a simple marker and map, hosting a community gathering to launch the Forum, organising a goat-clearing event along the CKC, testing a small asphalt-cutting pilot in an underused parking lot, and drafting the most-needed permit in the Regulatory Toolbox and sharing it with local businesses. These actions do not need to resolve the area's long-term challenges. Their value lies in signalling that change is possible, that partners are beginning to move, and that the concepts can be tested in practice.

Develop Enabling Conditions

Small actions build momentum, but sustained transformation requires the right conditions to be in place. Two enabling conditions stand out as priorities:

Regulatory Toolbox

This concept underpins all the others and should be an early priority. Develop pre-approved permit pathways for the most common interventions – signage, temporary use, stream crossings, food trucks, events (see Regulatory Toolbox).

Financing

Explore how the City can help finance implementation. This includes understanding what tools are available, such as grants, low-interest loans, tax incentives, public-private partnerships, and which concepts are most dependent on public support to get started. For building transformation specifically, the financing challenge is real: lenders are unfamiliar with adaptive reuse models, and the City may need to play a bridging role.


SPEED LIMIT 25

Open Questions for the City of Kirkland

The concepts in this report can move forward incrementally, but several decisions sit with the City and will shape what is possible. The following questions are offered as a starting point for future discussions.

What is the long-term future of the CKC?
The corridor's status as a potential transit route vs. a permanent trail underpins almost every concept in this report. Incremental decisions about access points, branding, and restoration will be impacted by future decisions about how the trail is used for transportation. Interventions should therefore be designed with the possibility in mind that the trail could in the future accommodate transit, even if any such change is likely to happen well into the future.

How will the City address displacement risk?
Rising rents are the primary fear of SIS businesses. As the area becomes more attractive, displacement pressure will increase. What tools – rent stabilization, right of first refusal, community land trusts, affordable commercial space requirements – would the City consider to avoid displacing the local businesses?

Can the City develop a Regulatory Toolbox for the SIS?
This requires internal coordination across Planning, Public Works, Parks, and the King County Health Department, and a commitment to maintain it as a living document. Who owns this, and what resources are available?

What role will the City play in the Forum and Generator?
The City's presence matters – showing up signals commitment. But being seen as running these initiatives will undermine their credibility as independent community structures. What is the right level of involvement?

What comes next in the planning process?
This report is an input to the sub-area planning process outlined in the comprehensive plan. When will that process begin, what will it cover, and how will the participants in this workshop process be re-engaged as stakeholders?



Closing

The nine concepts in this report were developed together with the people who know this area best. The next phase belongs to them, and to the City, which holds many of the tools to carry this work forward. We are proud of what this process has produced, and we look forward to seeing these ideas tested, refined, and brought to life across the SIS in the years ahead.

It has been a privilege to take part in this collaboration. We extend our sincere thanks to the Scan Design Foundation, whose support made this process possible, and to the City of Kirkland for its openness and engagement throughout. BLOXHUB and the Nordic expert team have been inspired by the energy, honesty, and imagination the Kirkland community brought to this process, and we hope this report can serve as a strong foundation for the work ahead. We welcome the opportunity to continue contributing as these ideas evolve into their next phase.



Appendix

3XN GXN
Is a Danish architecture studio founded in 1986, driven by the belief that architecture shapes behaviour. Working internationally from a Scandinavian foundation, they design with deep respect for people, resources and ecosystems. Through dialogue with clients, communities and collaborators, they integrate behavioural science, circular design and emerging technologies to create resilient, humane environments grounded in participation and shared knowledge.

AGORA
Explores ways to reinvent work and organizational structures. It challenges conventional management, leadership, and design practices and advocates for a creative, deliberate, and humanizing approach to organizing. AGORA aims to develop organizations that future generations aspire to work for—entities characterized by genuine care for the world, profound responsibility for the social environments they create, and the courage to distribute power equitably.

Schønherr
Is an award-winning landscape architecture and planning studio, working to shape cities and landscapes to address the major societal challenges of the future - with nature as the foundation and a Nordic perspective on simple solutions. Welfare is the goal, and beauty is the compass.



BLOXHUB