



COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Although not required by State law, the purpose of the Community Design Element is to guide future development and redevelopment that creates the visual identity of Kenmore, ensuring that the city continues to develop as a vibrant waterfront community, the natural environment is protected and , enhanced, ensuring compatible residential and commercial development , and the streetscape and landscape is enhanced.

The element is meant to address community goals of improving and maintaining Kenmore's natural and built environment, creating a variety of gathering places, and promoting the diversity of arts and cultural opportunities. The element also addresses the vision of protecting the natural environment through thoughtful building design and landscaping that complements and enhances public and natural spaces.

Countywide Planning Policies

The King County Countywide Planning Policies require jurisdictions to promote a high quality of design and site planning using traditional and innovative environmentally sensitive development practices in both publicly-funded construction (such as civic buildings, parks, bridges, transit stops) and private development.

BACKGROUND

At just over 6 square miles, Kenmore is a community that has developed over time with many established residential neighborhoods and a growing multi-family core in the downtown area along SR-522 (Bothell Way). Most residential neighborhoods outside the SR-522 corridor were built after the 1970s. These neighborhoods of predominantly single-family homes are generally in good condition and are well maintained. Trees are lacking along major arterials and along many residential streets. While most streets lack sidewalks, there are several collectors and minor arterials that have new sidewalks and street trees added.

SR-522 (Bothell Way), which dominates Kenmore's Downtown corridor, is the city's primary east-west corridor highly congested with regional automobile traffic. Included along its length are auto-oriented commercial establishments including gas stations, fast food restaurants, service stations, supermarkets, and other strip retail development that have been prevalent over the last several decades. Parking lots and pole signs dominate much of the appearance of the Downtown core area. While there are some newer developments located just to the north of SR-522, many buildings along the corridor lack a continuity of form, are set back from the street, and often have parking lots separating them from the street.

Completed in 2022, publicly funded infrastructure improvements along the SR-522 corridor from the eastern city boundary to approximately 61st Avenue NE included new sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, transit lanes, public art, and intersection improvements. Through strategic public investments, including City Hall, the Kenmore Library, the Northshore Fire Department

Headquarters, the Hanger and Town Square, as well as several privately funded mixed-use developments, a new Downtown Kenmore is emerging, particularly along the NE 181st corridor between 66th Avenue NE & 73rd Avenue NE.

COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICY

The Vision for Kenmore is multi-faceted, addressing community pride, residential livability, creation of a vibrant central place, enduring and attractive buildings and community spaces, natural environment protection, an interconnected circulation system, and connection to the waterfront, among others.

The City of Kenmore embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion, is striving to raise awareness of its history, its indigenous peoples, and nurtures the ethnic and cultural traditions of the community. The City also prioritizes sustainability and climate action initiatives, which has been further emphasized through the adoption of the city's first Climate Action Plan and Climate Action Element, both adopted in 2023.

While these priorities and objectives can be divided into separate topics and addressed in other Elements, as they are elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan, the Community Design Element goals, objectives, and policies are intended to bring together interrelated issues that affect the community environment and physical presence. Kenmore is a community that honors the past while looking forward to an innovative, sustainable, and vibrant future. Kenmore recognizes its role in the greater metropolitan area, while also valuing its role as a welcoming and diverse city with strong community values and culture.

To that end, the policies provide design guidance, particularly addressing:

- Downtown Kenmore as a Countywide mixed-use activity center with high density and intensity infill development
- Kenmore as a vibrant waterfront community that is connected both visually and physically to its waterfront
- Promotion of alternate modes of travel, and streetscape/landscape improvements
- Site design reflecting natural characteristics
- Compatibility in style and scale between uses of different intensities
- Emphasis on increasing vegetation in the community
- Compatible residential development standards.
- Promote inclusivity and sense of belonging through design.
- Site design that protects the natural environment to meet climate action goals.

To address most of the issues, particularly for larger or higher intensity developments, a key program is the design review process in Downtown Kenmore and high visibility areas. Design Standard Areas are identified along the SR-522 corridor, as well as to the north along both 68th Avenue NE and 73rd Avenue north to approximately NE 185th Street. The purpose and intent of

the design review process is to create a community that has attractive, functional, and enduring buildings and places, to create pedestrian-oriented mixed use areas, and to encourage green infrastructure.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Following are the community design goals, objectives and policies. In some cases, policies are cross-referenced in more than one Element or Element, and this is noted by a policy reference in italics (e.g., *Policy CD-4.5.1*).

GOAL CD-1 INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S CONNECTION TO THE WATERFRONT.

OBJECTIVE CD-1.1 Maintain, enhance, and protect view corridors to Lake Washington and the Sammamish River.

Policy CD-1.1.1 Identify important public view corridors to Lake Washington and the Sammamish River. Methods to retain existing views include, but are not limited to:

- Retain existing views currently in areas of public ownership, such as on City-owned lands.
- Retain view corridors in existing road rights of way, recreational areas and regional trail corridors such as Log Boom Park, Rhododendron Park, *Ḵ'axw'adis* (Tl' awh-ah-dees) Park, the Burke-Gilman Trail, SR-522, and along 68th Avenue NE, by requiring adjacent new developments to provide visual access.

Policy CD-1.1.2 Evaluate alternative development regulations and tools to maintain and enhance public view corridors to Lake Washington and the Sammamish River. Methods to maintain and enhance view corridors include, but are not limited to:

- Create potential for view corridors by requiring them in the design and permitting of private property development proposals.
- Require future Downtown master plans to capitalize on potential water views through design and development regulations such as design guidelines. These design and development regulations would address massing of buildings, percent of width, building heights, setbacks, signage, and scale of the built and pedestrian environment.
- Address potential interference in visual access, such as a pedestrian bridge connection over SR-522 in Downtown, through appropriate design.

OBJECTIVE CD-1.2 Maintain and enhance the public's ability to physically access and visually enjoy the Lake Washington and Sammamish River waterfronts.

- Policy CD-1.2.1 Consistent with the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element, establish and implement plans, development policies, regulations, and incentives to provide increased public access to the waterfront.

GOAL CD-2 PROVIDE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, OPEN SPACE, AND VEGETATION.

OBJECTIVE CD-2.1 Protect and reduce impacts to natural and environmentally critical areas, open space, trees, vegetation, natural terrain, and drainage.

- Policy CD-2.1.1 Through development standards, protect wetlands, streams and lakes, retaining habitat value and flood control. Ensure development is designed to be responsive to the environment.
- Policy CD-2.1.2 Through density and development guidelines, minimize development in environmentally sensitive areas such as landslide, erosion, seismic and flood hazard areas.
- Policy CD-2.1.3 During development review, encourage use of natural terrain and drainage, and native plants and landscaping to minimize erosion and promote the efficient use of renewable resources, water and energy.
- Policy CD-2.1.4 Promote the adequate provision of peripheral and internal open space and recreation uses in new development, including trails and parks.

OBJECTIVE CD-2.2 Integrate landscaping into streetscapes and developments and increase the biomass in the community.

- Policy CD-2.2.1 Continue to require tree management and protection plans for development and redevelopment proposals in Kenmore.
- Policy CD-2.2.2 Include requirements in development regulations to increase vegetation such as perimeter landscaping, parking stall/tree ratios, maximum impervious surface ratios, and other techniques. Consider incentives, such as density bonuses, to provide additional usable landscaped areas.
- Policy CD-2.2.3 Require developments to retain exceptional trees and include substantial landscape materials to achieve noticeable biomass.

OBJECTIVE CD-2.3 Encourage cluster residential development along with open space for efficient service delivery and greater environmental protection.

- Policy CD-2.3.1 In development regulations consider allowing lot size averaging, lot clustering, flexible setback requirements, and other techniques to protect environmentally sensitive areas or to achieve greater neighborhood compatibility. Requirements should include that when these techniques are used, the development should be consistent with development surrounding the site.

**GOAL CD-3 PROMOTE THE EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS AND
LESSEN THE RELIANCE ON THE AUTOMOBILE.**

OBJECTIVE CD-3.1 Create a safe, comfortable, expedient, accessible and attractive circulation system considering vehicles, emergency access, pedestrians, and bicycles where possible.

Policy CD-3.1.1 Adopt street design and construction standards that, in addition to facilitating vehicular access, also:

- a. Allow emergency vehicle access 24 hours a day;
- b. Allow for the development of a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network;
- c. Encourage transit and non-single occupant vehicle travel; and,
- d. Address aesthetic and environmental characteristics as well as function and safety.

OBJECTIVE CD-3.2 Promote development which encourages non-single occupant vehicle travel and alternate modes of transportation.

Policy CD-3.2.1 Promote mixed-use development to reduce vehicle travel between land uses, particularly in the Downtown districts.

Policy CD-3.2.2 Through development review, promote the appropriate location of parking areas to facilitate non-automobile travel.

Policy CD-3.2.3 Require new development and redevelopment proposals to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing trails, community facilities and services, transit, schools and the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy CD-3.2.4 Ensure zoning and subdivision regulations facilitate the creation of useable open space, community facilities and nonmotorized access. Pedestrian mobility should be prioritized and the impact of automobiles on the character of the neighborhood reduced.

Policy CD-3.2.5 Encourage a “park once downtown” to encourage multi-modal transit options.

OBJECTIVE CD-3.3 In addition to signage, create a system of visual cues on major streets, transit routes, sidewalks, and trails that help lead users to destinations.

Policy CD-3.3.1 Identify key local and regional destinations as follows:

- a. State, County, and City parks and open spaces;
- b. Neighborhood, Community, Regional, and Downtown commercial districts;

- c. Public and Private educational facilities;
- d. Transit centers; and
- e. Government facilities including City Hall, Northshore Utility District Headquarters, Fire Stations, Police Stations, Library, Community Centers, and others

Policy CD-3.3.2 Create a hierarchy of tree and vegetation standards, signs, light standards, public art, kiosks, or other features to direct users to key destinations. Apply these visual cues to the arterials, off-street trail network, and key local and regional destinations.

GOAL CD-4 CREATE ATTRACTIVE, FUNCTIONAL, AND ENDURING BUILDINGS AND PLACES.

OBJECTIVE CD-4.1 Create a sense of place and identity for Kenmore while allowing for diversity.

Policy CD-4.1.1 Through development quality, signage standards, landscape treatments, and public investment visible at community gateways and in a central Downtown, create a sense of identity and place for Kenmore.

Policy CD-4.1.2 Focus design review standards and guidelines towards Downtown as well as commercial and multi-family development Citywide. Ensure that provisions allow for creativity and flexibility while meeting common design principles. (see *Policy CD-4.5.1*)

Policy CD-4.1.3 Based upon input from residents and the business community, periodically update sign regulations to achieve the following:

- a. Create hierarchy of signage sizes and types addressing regionally-oriented mixed-use and commercial districts and locally-oriented mixed-use and commercial districts;
- b. Minimize sign clutter in business and mixed-use districts;
- c. Encourage signs which orient to non-motorists as well as motorists;
- d. Reduce the prevalence of billboards; and,
- e. Allow for sufficient visibility to support businesses.

Policy CD-4.1.4 Require screening of unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, storage areas, loading docks, and parking areas to minimize their visibility from adjacent properties, particularly residential districts, and from arterials. (see *Policy CD-4.5.5*)

OBJECTIVE CD-4.2 Use design standards that promote pedestrian-scale development with human-scale details and an orientation to the street.

Policy CD-4.2.1 Encourage commercial, high density, and mixed-use developments to incorporate features that are oriented to a human-scale such as upper story setbacks, façade modulation, variety in building materials, benches, street trees, plazas, projecting signs, canopies, street lamps, hanging baskets, or other features.

Policy CD-4.2.2 In commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use districts, encourage building, parking and site design treatments that accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists as well as automobiles.

Policy CD-4.2.3 Through design guidelines or standards, encourage appropriate levels of parking in commercial and mixed-use areas, as follows:

- a. Encourage shared and structured parking in the Downtown through requirements and incentives such as density bonuses;
- b. Require minimum parking levels, and discourage excessive parking standards through shared parking, demand studies, and other incentives or requirements where appropriate to avoid underutilized expanses of parking and encourage transit and alternate modes of transportation;
- c. Allow for parking to be visible, but not dominate the street view.

OBJECTIVE CD-4.3 Encourage pedestrian-oriented street design.

Policy CD-4.3.1 In coordination with the sidewalk priority system established in the Transportation Element, promote sidewalks along arterials and local streets, and sidewalk and path connections, where appropriate, to the off-street non-motorized trail network. For safety and aesthetic purposes, promote the use of landscaped buffers between curbs and sidewalks, particularly along arterials. Ensure appropriate levels of illumination. Encourage bus stops to have shelters and benches.

OBJECTIVE CD-4.4 Encourage design and development that promotes public safety.

Policy CD-4.4.1 Include “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” components in site design guidelines for new development. Where appropriate, techniques may include promoting mixed-use development, visibility of activity areas from surrounding residences and uses, increased pedestrian-level lighting, use of low fences, see-through landscaping, visible building entrances, and other techniques.

Policy CD-4.4.2 Provide street, access, and signage standards that allow for quick emergency vehicle responses.

OBJECTIVE CD-4.5 Encourage sustainable design and development.

Policy CD-4.5.1 Support green building.

OBJECTIVE CD-4.6 Support existing neighborhoods.

Policy CD-4.6.1 Consider establishing a matching grant fund for improvement projects proposed by neighborhood or business groups.

Policy CD-4.6.2 Allow for neighborhood entry markers in sign regulations.

GOAL CD-5 PROMOTE COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

OBJECTIVE CD-5.1 Prepare and implement development standards and regulations that acknowledge neighborhood character.

Policy CD-5.1.1 Consider amendments to permitted uses, lot and building dimensional standards, street allowances, and other requirements to achieve compatible development in single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use districts.

Policy CD-5.1.2 Provide a variety of options such as driveways and joint-use driveways in a manner that allows for integration of new development into existing neighborhoods. Match improvement standards to the number of lots to be served. Encourage the interconnection of the local street pattern.

OBJECTIVE CD-5.2 Ensure that new housing is compatible with surrounding development in scale and/or design and provides adequate on-site parking.

Policy CD-5.2.1 Ensure dwellings are designed in accordance with zoning code requirements applied to achieve compatible housing patterns yet allow for individuality, as well as improvement over time.

Policy CD-5.2.2 Develop and apply multi-family design guidelines and standards to achieve quality development and compatibility with surrounding uses. Variation in facades, roof lines, and other building design features should be used to give a residential scale and identity to multi-family developments at the development edge. Require multi-family residential development to provide both common and private open space.

Policy CD-5.2.3 In design guidelines and standards, ensure the provision of common facilities in multi-family developments, such as open space, internal walkways, roads, parking, laundry rooms, solid waste and recycling areas, and mailboxes.

Policy CD-5.2.4 Ensure multi-family parking standards address sufficient off-street parking to accommodate residents and visitors.

GOAL CD-6 PRESERVE AND ENHANCE KENMORE'S UNIQUE IDENTITY AS AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE CD-6.1 Provide a community atmosphere that is inclusive and family-friendly, and that fosters a sense of belonging and pride.

Policy CD-6.1.1 Support and develop community events that foster pride in the community such as fairs, parades, community forums, or other events celebrating Kenmore citizens, institutions, history, or other community features.

Policy CD-6.1.2 Provide locations for public gatherings in civic and commercial developments where appropriate. (*see Policy CD-4.5.6*)

Policy CD-6.1.3 Encourage private reinvestment in residential and commercial areas by:

- a. Developing and implementing capital facility plans for transportation, surface water and parks facilities maintenance and improvements;
- b. Supporting housing rehabilitation assistance programs offered by King County or other agencies;
- c. Supporting weatherization programs offered by King County or utilities;
- d. Investigating mechanisms that support historic residential and commercial sites or neighborhoods;
- e. Encouraging liberal refuse pick-up, including large items;
- f. Supporting the formation of business improvement districts; and
- g. Considering funding matches, loans or similar programs for owners rehabilitating commercial buildings and sites.

Policy CD-6.1.4 Provide appropriate resources towards enforcing nuisance ordinances addressing junk cars, noxious weeds, and other blighting influences.

Policy CD-6.1.5 Provide appropriate resources towards building and zoning code enforcement to help ensure sufficient structure and site quality and maintenance.

OBJECTIVE CD-6.2 Maintain compatible development in residential neighborhoods.

Policy CD-6.2.1 Achieve compatibility in residential neighborhoods through the application of development standards addressing building size. Standards may address building height, roof pitch, lot coverage, floor area ratios, setbacks, maximum impervious surfaces, and other aspects that affect building size.

Policy CD-6.2.2 Non-residential uses such as governmental, utility, religious, social, and other institutional uses should consider surrounding neighborhood character when siting such facilities in residential neighborhoods. Design should consider appropriate building form, location of activities on the site, transitions and buffers as appropriate to achieve compatibility.

OBJECTIVE CD-6.3 Seek to integrate development that protects environmental quality, and enhances the community's quality of life.

- Policy CD-6.3.1 Encourage the consolidation of land to achieve development that is functional, attractive, and offers community amenities.
- Policy CD-6.3.2 Require master plans for properties in the Public and Private Facilities land use district, and for developments exceeding a size threshold in the Downtown zones.
- Policy CD-6.3.3 Ensure that developments protect environmentally sensitive areas and develop design solutions that recognize natural features and cultural resources (historic or archaeological) as site and community amenities.

GOAL CD-7 WELCOME TRAVELERS AND RESIDENTS TO THE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE CD-7.1 Promote the development of primary gateways to the City through development quality, design and landscape standards, land use regulations, and street standards.

- Policy CD-7.1.1 Define the primary entrances to the City as follows:
- a. The vicinity of the western city limits along Bothell Way;
 - b. The vicinity of the eastern city limits along Bothell Way;
 - c. The vicinity of the southern city limits along Juanita Drive;
 - d. The vicinity of the southeastern city limits along Simonds Road; and,
 - e. The Kenmore Park & Ride.
 - f. The Burke Gilman Trail.
- Policy CD-7.1.2 Address secondary entrances to the City along arterials not listed in Policy CD-12.1.1.1, as well as waterway entrances from Lake Washington.
- Policy CD-7.1.3 Define gateway entrances through coordinated streetscape improvements such as gateway markers, landscaping, or other methods.
- Policy CD-7.1.4 Through land use and development regulations as well as strategic investment, ensure quality development and infrastructure define Kenmore.

OBJECTIVE CD-7.2 Promote quality urban design and encourage street trees and vegetation along SR-522.

- Policy CD-7.2.1 Apply design and signage regulations to commercial and mixed-use developments along SR-522 addressing building size, orientation, access points, linked parking areas, and other measures to ensure

noticeable, attractive visual appeal. Recognize the need for view corridors to business signs

GOAL CD-8 HONOR AND CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF KENMORE

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| Policy CD-8.1.1 | Collaborate with Kenmore Heritage Society to foster knowledge and appreciation of the city's historical resources and heritage. |
| Policy CD-8.1.2 | Participate with local, county, state, and national historical organizations to educate Kenmore residents about the value of local cultural and historical resources through educational and informational exhibits, brochures, events, and the City's website. |
| Policy CD-8.1.3 | Continue to collaborate with community partners to provide information that interprets the history of Kenmore, including historical displays, programs, activities, special events, landmark plaques, and interpretive signage. |
| Policy CD-8.1.4 | Support the preservation of historical buildings, such as the Kenmore Community Clubhouse, former St. Edward Seminary (The Lodge at St. Edward), and the Thomsen Estate, as well as other buildings and sites with historical significance. |

GOAL CD-9 CELEBRATE COMMUNITY DIVERSITY AND PROMOTE CULTURAL AWARENESS

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| Policy CD-9.1.1 | Connect and partner with community, business, and social service groups and organizations to celebrate the diversity and cultural heritage of Kenmore. |
| Policy CD-9.1.2 | Continue to facilitate city-wide, neighborhood, and community cultural events. |
| Policy CD-9.1.3 | Support programs which engage and educate residents and community leaders about diversity and cultural awareness. |
| Policy CD-9.1.4 | Continue ongoing implementation of the City's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan policies to educate and foster a community of respect, equity, and mutual understanding. |

GOAL CD-10 SUPPORT ACCESS TO PERFORMANCE AND VISUAL ARTS IN KENMORE

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| Policy CD-10.1.1 | Collaborate with Arts of Kenmore to celebrate and integrate projects and programming that reflect the interests of the community. |
| Policy CD-10.1.2 | Promote and sustain a vibrant creative community which helps celebrate cultural heritage and strengthens community identity. |

Policy CD-10.1.3 Expand Kenmore’s public art collection to include pieces and programs that represent the cultural diversity of the community.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Community Design policies would require new or increased commitments of City resources to prepare new regulations, review/amend existing regulations, create educational or incentive programs, or coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions.

New programs, rules, or regulations would be needed to address:

- Strategies to promote housing reinvestment
- Downtown redevelopment incentives
- Matching grant funds for community projects
- Community gateway standards
- Master plan requirements for the Public and Private Facilities district.

A review of existing programs, rules and regulations would be needed to ensure they meet the policies. Rules, regulations and programs that should be reviewed include:

- Community events sponsorships
- Capital infrastructure plans
- Nuisance/violation regulations and enforcement
- Development standards addressing neighborhood character and compatibility with surrounding development
- Sign regulations
- Sidewalk standards
- Landscape standards
- Street standards
- Tree retention requirements
- Cluster development regulations.

Additional or continuing efforts would need to be made to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions or to participate in regional programs, including:

- Coordination with WSDOT regarding improvements and access along SR-522.
- Support the revival and growth of business and retail in the Downtown district, aligning with its unique character. Foster attractions that appeal to patrons throughout the day and evening. Offer a balanced mix of on-street, surface, and structured parking options, along with shared and multi-modal alternatives. Whenever possible, reduce parking requirements.

REFERENCES

Kenmore Heritage Society, <https://kenmoreheritagesociety.com/> (2024).

King County Growth Management Planning Council (December 2021). Countywide Planning Policies. Seattle, WA.