



## MEMORANDUM

To: STEP Housing Committee Members  
Debbie Bent, Community Development Director

From: Nick Chen, AICP  
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: August 20, 2025

Subject: STEP Housing Committee, Meeting #5 – Recommended Code Updates

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At the direction of the City of Kenmore STEP Housing Committee at the July 30, 2025 meeting, Kimley-Horn has prepared draft recommendations for development code and permitting process updates for review by the STEP Housing Committee and eventual presentation to Kenmore City Council. This memo describes the recommended definitions and code amendments to bring Kenmore’s Municipal Code (KMC) into compliance with [RCW 35.21.683](#).

### DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are recommended to be adopted into KMC Section 18.20:

*“Good Neighbor Agreement”* means an agreement, in the form of a signed document between the operator of the STEP housing development and all applicable parties (e.g. neighboring businesses, neighborhood associations, etc) outlined in the agreement, detailing operating procedures, communication, and policies for the STEP housing development as it relates to its residents and property owners within a 500 foot radius from the STEP housing property boundary as defined in the agreement.

*“Permanent Supportive Housing”* is subsidized, leased housing with no limit on length of stay that prioritizes people who need comprehensive support services to retain tenancy and utilizes admissions practices designed to use lower barriers to entry than would be typical for other subsidized or unsubsidized rental housing, especially related to rental history, criminal history and personal behaviors. Permanent supportive housing is paired with on-site or off-site voluntary services designed to support a person living with a complex and disabling behavioral health or physical health condition who was experiencing homelessness or was at imminent risk of homelessness prior to moving into housing to retain their housing and be a successful tenant in a housing arrangement, improve the resident’s health status, and connect the resident of the housing with community-based health care, treatment or employment services. Permanent supportive housing is subject to all of the rights and responsibilities defined in Chapter 59.18 RCW (RCW 36.70A.030(31)).

“*Transitional housing*” means a project that provides housing and supportive services to unhoused persons or families and that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless persons and families into independent living, generally in less than two years (RCW 84.36.043(3)(c)). [Ord. 4393 § 1 (Exh. A), 2025].

“*Emergency shelter*” means a facility that provides a temporary shelter for individuals or families who are currently homeless. Emergency shelter may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement. Emergency shelter facilities may include day and warming centers that do not provide overnight accommodations (RCW 36.70A.030(15)).

“*Emergency housing*” means temporary indoor accommodations for individuals or families who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless that are intended to address the basic health, food, clothing and personal hygiene needs of individuals or families. Emergency housing may or may not require occupants to enter into a lease or an occupancy agreement (RCW 36.70A.030(14)).

“*Temporary*,” as applied in this chapter, applies to the person and how long they reside in STEP housing, not the structure or length of time for the land use.

“*STEP Housing*” refers to Emergency shelter, Transitional housing, Emergency housing, and Permanent supportive housing. See definitions for those individual terms.

## **KENMORE ENTITLEMENT PROCESSES**

STEP housing developments will be reviewed under a Type 1 review process, as described in [KMC 19.25](#) provided a good neighbor agreement is signed between the City, the development operator, and neighboring parties. Footnote 6 (applied to the Type 1 Process) would be added which is proposed to read “*Establishment of a good neighbor agreement is recommended for all Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Emergency Housing developments. A sample good neighbor agreement is available through the Planning Department.*” A Type 1 review process is a decision by the Development Services Director with no administrative appeal. There are no Public Notice requirements for a Type 1 review process unless the application is also subject to SEPA review.

In addition to the existing standards, the following requirements could be added for STEP Housing project. The Kenmore STEP Housing Committee will be asked to recommend or not recommend some, none, or all of the following:

- The Applicant must submit a project narrative identifying some or all of the following:
  - An equity analysis showing that consideration was given to potential sites such that siting of the facility will have no undue impact on any one racial, cultural, or socioeconomic group, and that there will not be a resulting concentration of similar facilities in a particular neighborhood.
  - Description of a need for the project, as supported by a detailed written analysis of the projected service population, an inventory of existing and planned comparable facilities, and the projected demand for the type of facility proposed.

- Description of reasonably investigated alternative sites, as evidenced by a detailed explanation of site selection methodology.
- Proposed mitigation measures including the use of effective site buffering from adjacent uses.
- A general description of the security plan for the facility and the residents.

**POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS**

The following code sections are recommended to be amended in the KMC to comply with [RCW 35.21.683](#):

**Allowed Uses:**

The following Kenmore Municipal Code sections are proposed to be amended in order to establish the newly defined terms as permitted uses. State Law (RCW 35.21.683 and RCW 35A.21.430) requires that cities shall not prohibit transitional housing or permanent supportive housing in any zones which residential dwelling units or hotels are allowed. Cities also shall not prohibit indoor emergency shelters and indoor emergency housing in any zones in which hotels are allowed except in such cities that have adopted an ordinance authorizing indoor emergency shelters and indoor emergency housing in a majority of zones within a one-mile proximity to transit.

Zoning Code Section	Proposed Language Change
KMC 18.21.020, Table A (R1, R4, R6 Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.21.040, Table C (R12, R18, R24 Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.21.045, Table D (Manufactured Housing Communities MHC Zone) KMC 18.24.020, Table A (Downtown Residential Use Allowances) KMC 18.24A.020, Table A (Urban Residential Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.25.020, Table A (Downtown Commercial Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.25A.030, Table A (Urban Corridor West Sub-Area Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.25B.020, Table A (Waterfront Commercial Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.26.030, -040, -050, Table A (Regional Business Zone North, East and West Sub-Area Zone Use Allowances) KMC 18.29.040, Table A (Urban Corridor East Sub-Area Zone Use Allowances)	Add Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing as permitted uses, with a footnote on a recommendation for a Good Neighbor Agreement.

Zoning Code Section	Proposed Language Change
KMC 18.25.020, Table A KMC 18.25A.030, Table A KMC 18.25B.020, Table A KMC 18.26.030, -040, -050, Table A KMC 18.29.040, Table A	Add Emergency Housing as a permitted use, with a footnote on a recommendation for a Good Neighbor Agreement.
KMC 18.24A.020, Table A KMC 18.25.020, Table A KMC 18.25A.030, Table A KMC 18.25B.020, Table A KMC 18.26.030, Table A	Add Emergency Shelter as a permitted use
KMC 18.100.200 (Indoor and outdoor temporary homeless shelters) and 210 (Cold-weather low-barrier shelters)	The City of Kenmore is currently modifying the requirements of these two sections as a separate but related effort. Staff is coordinating on these changes to see how they should change to meet Emergency Housing requirements.

The following are draft code language that could be added to the applicable code sections or in a separate STEP housing development code section. The Kenmore STEP Housing Committee will be asked to recommend or not recommend some, none, or all of the following:

- STEP Housing projects can have unique characteristics based on the intended users and services provided. A variance to existing development standards may be considered through the Variance process outlined in KMC 18.115.030. A variance is a Type 2 decision process decision by the Development Services Director, appealable to the Hearing Examiner with no further administrative appeal.
- A parking modification plan may be provided to reduce required parking for permanent supportive and transitional housing projects. Parking modification plans are reviewed and approved administratively by the Development Services Director. Parking modification plans must include:
  - The revised parking standard being requested.
  - A parking study, including observed parking counts, which analyzes parking utilization of existing similar uses or otherwise demonstrates how a reduction in parking will not adversely impact surrounding properties.