

City of Kenmore
STEP Housing Committee Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2025 @ 5:00 PM

STEP Housing Committee Members – In Attendance

Timothy Marchello
Caitlin Sullivan
Juliana Pooley

Staff

Nick Chen, Kimley-Horn (Consultant/facilitator)
Sam Matterazzo, Kimley-Horn (Consultant)
Debbie Bent, Community Development Director
Brittany Chue, Senior Planner

Meeting Agenda

Overview of good neighbor agreements, resident – operator agreements, and proposed code edits and definitions.

Good Neighbor Agreement

- Caitlin Sullivan: For the operator, is it standard to have 24/7 staff for security or is it non-standard?
- Nick Chen: For larger developments, there typically is 24/7 staff, but might be overly burdensome for smaller developments that have a couple of units.
- Juliana Pooley: Agrees there is a difference between small specialist units and larger ones. Would like the Good Neighbor Agreement to be recommended but not required to not prevent projects. If all businesses and neighbors have to require a yes, then it might not work out if one business can hold up the agreement.
- Nick Chen: Ultimately, the law decides where STEP development can go but neighbors can still voice their opinions through the public process. Many cities do not require the agreement.
- Juliana Pooley: Do not want to inadvertently create a loophole through the agreement.
- Caitlin Sullivan: What if it's a requirement to deliver a good neighbor agreement? What if we don't put a line for neighbors to sign off but just leave it like that? If we require it on any level to be returned, this could complicate and block developments.
- Nick Chen: We wanted to have this in place without putting an impediment in. People might also claim they did not receive the agreement. Can develop standard agreement and will think about language on how this could work in terms of delivery.

- Timothy Marchello: Should we include the word neighbors as opposed to just businesses surrounding the area?
- Nick Chen: We will double check the language in the sample we sent over to include neighbors.

Resident – Operator Agreement

- No questions or comments from committee members.

Proposed Code Edits and Definitions

- Juliana Pooley: Recognize zoning is in a lot of the city, wants it to be easy for places of worship to develop STEP Housing on property. In California, a non-profit built PSH housing on property when they did a re-model. Lots of creative ways to do housing, wants faith communities to be actively involved in housing neighbors, could add language for places of worship, not sure if there's an example from other cities.
- Nick Chen: There is overlap because a lot of those uses are in residential zones, can build churches in any zone because of religious freedom.
- Juliana Pooley: Parking requirements can be a barrier. If places of worship want to do something on their land, want zoning to have the fewest barriers possible.
- Nick Chen: The city can consider those things. There are laws that relate to temporary shelters and places of worship that may not apply to other STEP housing types but will double check the language for places of worship.
- Caitlin Sullivan: Is there a parking reduction for STEP Housing?
- Nick Chen: Could propose that parking can be modified through a variance or can have a more streamlined process through a parking modification plan with director approval. Parking could be off set with shuttle services, would be outlined in the plan.
- Caitlin Sullivan: Wants parking reduction calculation in the code, as little subjectivity as possible. Parking requirement for STEP housing is lower than other types, if we can build that into the code, it makes it easier on everybody.
- Nick Chen: We can look at examples of what other jurisdictions have done and draft some language.
- Juliana Pooley: Agrees with Caitlin on parking reductions.
- Timothy Marchello: Against too much reduction in parking, too much of a burden on neighboring communities. With a limited number of people attending today, would like to chat about it next time with the bigger group, or specific steps on how much we can reduce parking.
- Nick Chen: We can bring forward both approaches, has not seen it done before so wants to see what's worked in the past in other jurisdictions.

Might send it out over email, do want to get feedback from the larger group.

- Juliana Pooley: Do not want to dismiss Tim's concerns. Each parking space is expensive. When we're already building housing that requires subsidies, wants calculation to be thoughtful. Expect that housing tenants may not be driving or owning cars as much as other developments. Anytime there's a large development, will wonder about the impact on parking, noise, and other things. Don't want housing to not be built because parking is expensive or it's poorly designed, but also don't want to get angry at a project because there's not enough parking.
- Nick Chen: Introduce ways to create flexibility vs. strict requirements that need to be met. Flexibility is helpful. Developers will build the parking they need and won't build more, unless it's required. This will depend on the population as well. Parking requirements could be drastically different for developments with families vs. senior residents that won't drive as much.
- Caitlin Sullivan: Don't want people to build more parking than is necessary. If we can right size parking to STEP housing instead of other types of housing. Don't want to force developers to build more.

Potential Code Edits and Definitions

Project narrative with an equity analysis

- Caitlin Sullivan: Is the project narrative with equity analysis required for other developments in Kenmore or in other jurisdictions?
- Nick Chen: No
- Juliana Pooley: Thought that equity analysis was to prevent STEP housing from being concentrated in one area and recognizing the broader community and resources, is it something else?
- Nick Chen: Yes, that's correct, equity throughout the community and making sure certain areas are not targeted, or there's not an overconcentration in one area.
- Caitlin Sullivan: Problem in Kenmore that all our services are concentrated along the highway, would be great to have them spread out. Would also be great to have a walkable transit friendly north of Kenmore. So many things would have to change to spread STEP, services, and transit throughout the city. STEP housing will be concentrated, don't see another way for people to access transit and services.
- Juliana Pooley: Does not like redlining and inadvertently clustering, transit-oriented development is so key for this type of housing and connectivity with high need neighbors. Will be building along transit lines. Would like small pockets of group homes in residential spaces but don't want equity to be weaponized. The equity analysis seems like a barrier.

- Timothy Marchello: Based on geographics of the city, don't have any choice but to have a specific narrative. I don't know if we can get around it.
- Nick Chen: We'll circle this around to gather thoughts from the rest of the group.

Description of a need for the project

Description of reasonably investigated alternative sites

Requiring buffering from adjacent uses

Description of a proposed security plan

- Juliana Pooley: Did not understand why developers have to defend why they wanted to build here.
- Nick Chen: More burdensome than requirements for market rate housing.
- Juliana Pooley: Why can't they say empty lot is for sale?
- Caitlin Sullivan: Or Kenmore needs so many housing units so we're building here.
- Juliana Pooley: Did not like the reasonably investigated alternative sites. The need for the project? Absolutely. The proposed security plan? Absolutely. Community does care about the impact of parking and what type. People will be interested in who will live there: disabled veterans, group home with teenagers. Some things will be good to have in the narrative. Does not like equity analysis and proving why you're turning down other options.
- Nick Chen: Typically, projects have narrative that says please give us a description of what you're proposing. Other nuanced components don't exist. Will circulate this out to the group and ask for feedback to give people more time to think about it.

Community Open House

- Nick Chen: The Open House will be on Sept. 17th from 6-8 pm. Goal is to have as many people attend as possible.
- Caitlin Sullivan: What will Committee role be for Open House?
- Nick Chen: We will have people at each station. Your role is to be there to respond to community questions, floating around and engaging with people as members of the Committee.
- Juliana Pooley: Public notice, some people did not feel notified. Close to Downtown, gets mail for public notice. If you want to know what's going on, subscribe to emails or Top Four, could we make an email list that is just for housing development? Not just STEP housing, but any housing, is that an option?
- Debbie Bent: We want to get as much notice as we can, Code does prescribe when noticing is required. For example, for a Type I process,

there's not a requirement for public notice. We would run into the same issue with some people not knowing. With the channels that we have and website on housing, we can improve that. Am with you, would love for everyone to get a notice. Hesitant about creating a process or another list, especially if it's optional. People might say, I would've said something but I wasn't on the list. If it's a larger development, such as STEP Housing, we can have a community engagement template to help.

- Juliana Pooley: Anytime we can make what we're doing for STEP housing be similar to other announcements or the same, how can we make STEP housing notices and the requirements for the notice to be the same?
- Debbie Bent: We're all on the same page, for the most part, STEP housing is looked at with the process and noticing requirements in the same way that any other type of housing is regardless of size.
- Juliana Pooley: Sometimes there are large buildings that people wonder about that is not uniquely a STEP concern.
- Debbie Bent: Anytime something is built, people want to know what it is. Hard to anticipate what those would be and are concerns reasonable. Sometimes people articulate what concerns are and then it can be assessed, whether it's noise, parking, or something different. Would look at noticing and public comments in the same way we do for any other kind of development.
- Nick Chen: I don't think there is a requirement for a public meeting, can have a recommendation early on for applicants to engage the community. In terms of city processes, can provide feedback to developers during the pre-application meeting about having a community meeting for all kinds of developments.
- Caitlin Sullivan: If STEP housing page will stay on website, is it possible to add a line, we received this project for STEP and can add it on the page? These are the projects permitted, these are undergoing review. Then people can just look, 1 or 2 lines of text for every application.
- Nick Chen: Debbie you mentioned those projects are on the development services page, can add them to STEP page as well to give people more clarity.
- Debbie Bent: Seems like a great idea, good way for people to find information.

Next Steps

- Nick Chen: Will have materials ready for Open House, goal is to bring recommendations to City Council in October.
- Debbie Bent: Targeting after the Open House, to have time to consolidate comments and to put a packet together for Council, so likely later in October.