

# Positioning Statement

“Kenmore Village is a walkable place with a public square where Kenmore-area residents and workers can meet their daily needs and see one another face-to-face.”

## Definition and Discussion

**“Kenmore Village”:** This refers to the former portions of the shopping center and the park-and-ride lot now owned by the City and the park. This positioning statement envisions a commercial area with a public square, with residential uses adjacent to and possibly above the commercial areas.

**“Walkable Place”:** “Walkable” here has two meanings: both walkable within and walkable to. While most standard shopping centers are walkable in the sense that distances are not so great that shoppers have to get in their cars and drive between stores, the monotony of the parking lots and the fact of walking down drive lanes discourages most people from going more than several hundred feet. In a truly walkable place, pedestrians feel safe and there are interesting things along the route that draw them forward. The second meaning of “walkable”, “walkable to”, means that Kenmore Village is perceived to be a walkable destination, that it is either within walking distance of neighborhoods or work places or other stores, or that the route itself is interesting enough to make the walk.

The second word here, “place”, implies not just that this is a piece of property or real estate or a destination for day-to-day needs, but that it has a sense of place, an interesting character and personality that comes as much from what goes on there as from the buildings and layout.

**“Public square”:** This will be a place the public owns and controls, where people can sit down without worrying about when the stores or shopping center close. It is a public place at the center of things, where people from different backgrounds can strike up a conversation. It is important that this square be integrated with other uses so that it has life day to day. Just because it is a public square and carries the civic identity does not mean that it cannot have less formal and more active uses on the side, like a skateboard park or pea patches.

**“Kenmore area residents and workers”:** While the users may initially be mostly nearby residents, over time this should serve as amenity for nearby businesses, so workers can walk to coffee, take a break from work and hold business meetings there either outside or in restaurants and coffee shops. Things like a gym will also serve draw worker use.

It is also important to define residents inclusively, to include not just middle-income families but seniors, low-income families, latch-key kids, single people, the elderly, teens hanging out together, childless couples, empty nesters, and those who speak a foreign language at home. Recognizing the variety of these different kinds of people will lead to more interesting design and programming. One of the best prospects for animating this space is meeting the needs of the large number of people already living nearby who do not now have much improved outdoor space to enjoy.

**“Daily Needs”:** This is in contrast to comparison goods purchased in Lynwood, Northgate or University Village. As used here, “daily needs” includes cash and non-cash goods, services and experiences.

On the commercial side, this could include food stores, restaurants, coffee houses, hair salons, pet stores, toy stores, banks, wealth managers, realtors, title companies, insurance firms, gyms, yoga parlors, clothing and shoe stores, stationery and specialty paper stores, knitting and quilting stores, rug and furnishing stores, tutoring and test preparation, ice cream stores, art and framing, optometrists, medical clinics, dentists, pet care, and mailing stores. The key distinction is between high volume/ low service establishments found in the malls and low-volume/ high service establishments found more locally, where convenience, staff training and customer relationships are critical to success.

On the public service side this will or could include reading at the library, book check out and meetings held at the library; visits to the post office, license renewal at a DMV office, and picking up permits at City Hall.

On the civic and non-profit side, this could include a community center, a re-located senior center, a youth club, and garden-club maintenance of the public square or nearby arbors.

At the personal and individual level, this could mean making Kenmore Village a destination for a walk, sitting in the park and watching kids or other people, meeting there as a starting point for rides with a bicycling group, or joining an exercise group in the park.

**“See One Another Face to Face”:** Two people passing in a supermarket parking lot may glance at one another or, if they know one another, stop briefly to talk, but Kenmore Village will provide a place where people can slow down enough to talk and even sit down if they want to. The promise of the place is that you will regularly run into someone you know or even make new friends there.