

# Plymouth Supportive Permanent Housing in Kenmore Project Overview and Frequently Asked Questions



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Mid-rise building with 100 rental apartments, consisting of 85 studios and 15 one-bedroom units.
- All 100 units will serve extremely low-income individuals (30% Area Median Income, or less than \$28,800/year) that are “exiting homelessness”. This is a requirement of state and federal funding sources, which account for more than 75% of project funding (\$30M+).
- The City Council’s top priority of affordable housing led to selection of City-owned property at 6532 NE Bothell Way as the preferred site for this development. See [October 25, 2021 Council Meeting Agenda packet](#) (IX.A.), [November 15, 2021 Council Meeting Agenda packet](#) (Business Agenda B.) for history of the selection of the property.
- The site was chosen for its walkability, proximity to services and amenities for future residents, and as a component of future downtown development.
- Plymouth was selected through a competitive process and met the City’s goals of 80–100 units of housing on the site, as well as limited parking to maximize housing units.
- See [December 11, 2023 Council Meeting Agenda packet](#) for history of the selection of Plymouth Housing through Request for Proposals (RFP) process, and details of the development agreement as originally proposed.
- “Permanent Supportive Housing” (PSH), meaning wrap-around support services are provided in the building to tenants, included in the cost of rent.
- Additional information, including communication with Council and the public can be found on the Plymouth Housing [project page](#).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is the Plymouth Permanent Supportive Housing Project in Kenmore?

Located at 6532 NE Bothell Way, the proposed mid-rise building will feature 100 apartment units, consisting of 85 studios and 15 one-bedroom units. The proposed housing will serve extremely-low-income individuals (30% Area Median Income (AMI), or less than \$28,800/year) who are exiting homelessness.

In 2021, in response to the Kenmore City Council’s #1 priority to “increase and preserve the options for affordable housing stock”, the City issued a request for proposals for an affordable housing development that served at least 10% of individuals at 30% AMI and provided 80-100 new residential units. In the request, the City offered to donate the land and \$3.2 million in City funding towards the project, which prompted an additional initial commitment of \$3 million from A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). The financial commitment of the City and ARCH allowed Plymouth the opportunity to create a proposal

that went beyond 10% of units at 30% AMI – 100% of all units in this proposal are for individuals at or below 30% AMI.

An additional \$30M+ in funding has since been acquired from national and state affordable housing resources, outlined in “funding” below.

## **2. How long has the City been working on this project? How have they communicated with the public about this project?**

The City has been working on this specific location and development since 2021. The Council’s number one priority for 2021-2022 and number two priority for 2023 was to increase and preserve the options for affordable housing stock. In support of this goal, and at the direction of the City Council, the City developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for affordable housing on City-owned property at 6532 Bothell Way NE.

Plymouth Housing Group (Plymouth) was selected through this RFP process to build 100 units of housing at the site in May 2022. In June 2022, the City Council approved the selection of the Plymouth proposal and directed staff and Plymouth to further develop the proposal and return at a later date for City Council approval of the final plan and development agreement.

The Plymouth team has been working in coordination with City staff towards breaking ground on that development since June 2022, and staff have been before Council nineteen times from 2021-2023 to discuss all the different elements of this project ([City Council Presentations and Agenda Items](#), towards bottom of page).

A list of public communications related to this project is on the left side bar of the [City webpage](#). The development is currently fully funded and in the final phases of permitting to provide critically needed housing to individuals at or below 30% AMI that are exiting homelessness and/or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The [December 11, 2023 Agenda Bill packet](#) provides additional background information on the history of the selection of Plymouth and proposed development agreement for the 6532 Bothell Way NE property.

## **PROGRAM MODEL: PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

### **3. What is Permanent Supportive Housing?**

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a best practice, cost-effective, and proven strategy that combines three elements: permanently affordable housing, comprehensive support services for tenants, and project-based rental assistance. Residents enter a lease similar to any other housing development, with the added benefit of on-site resources including case management, health care, communal activities, and behavioral health services. All services provided within the building are coordinated and paid for by Plymouth; the City has no financial or operational obligations toward the provision of supportive services within the building. Plymouth has successfully funded and run similar supportive housing programs for over 40 years.

This is not a shelter or transitional housing—PSH is rental housing for individuals at or below 30% AMI (\$28,800/year) that provides the additional benefit of supportive services tailored to the needs of the resident. Plymouth will provide 24/7 on-site staffing of the building. PSH services are designed to effectively support communities’ most vulnerable populations in reaching long-term housing success.

This is an apartment building first and foremost with the addition of supportive services, and Plymouth must abide by all landlord-tenant laws established by the federal government. Tenants are responsible

for paying rent, abiding by their lease, following building rules, and ensuring the health and safety of themselves, Plymouth staff, and neighbors.

The Plymouth Kenmore PSH will receive project-based section 8 housing vouchers from King County Housing Authority (KCHA), which means residents will pay 30% of their income towards rent.

#### **4. What are resident lease agreements like for Permanent Supportive Housing developments?**

When someone moves into a Plymouth building, they agree to a number of lease terms and building rules that help produce safe community living. Residents agree to items such as not having weapons, dealing drugs on-site, or engaging in unlawful activities.

Residents are asked to use guest sign-in and -out systems, so Plymouth is aware of who is coming onto the property. Additionally, residents are expected to keep their apartments in good condition, so Plymouth conducts regular health and safety inspections to check in with residents and support them as needed.

#### **5. What does 30% AMI mean? (in actual dollars, and what sources of income do PSH tenants typically have?)**

Area Median Income (AMI) is a key metric in affordable housing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) defines individuals who earn 30% or less of the AMI as extremely low income. For Kenmore, that would be \$28,800/year or less in 2023. Most Plymouth residents receive social security income, which is somewhere in the vicinity of \$10,000 or under, which is less than half of the 30% AMI threshold. Other common sources of income include the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) benefit (which is currently \$450 a month), various amounts from SSA or SSDI, or day labor.

#### **6. What does low barrier mean?**

Once somebody has experienced homelessness, they're often shut out of housing by barriers like rental history requirements, credit checks, and up-front security deposits. Using the Housing First model, Plymouth lowers barriers so that housing is accessible to the people who need it.

#### **7. King County Housing Authority will be screening residents as a part of the housing vouchers. What are the actual screening criteria, especially concerning drugs and sex offenders?**

Plymouth follows the same guidelines for subsidized housing eligibility as the King County Housing Authority (KCHA), which can be found here: <https://www.kcha.org/housing/subsidized/eligibility>.

All Plymouth residents are primarily single adults who have come directly from homelessness into their housing. Per KCHA requirements, most come to Plymouth with some level of disability. Anyone who moves into Plymouth Housing must be a U.S. citizen and have a social security number on file. They also undergo criminal background checks including credit checks, rental history checks, and lifetime sex offender registration checks.

Regarding sex offenses, KCHA will specifically screen out lifetime registered sex offenders and/or those with Class A felonies. Beyond KCHA's screening, Plymouth assesses the suitability of applicants internally. If an applicant has a sex offense permitted by the KCHA, Plymouth will allow the applicant to provide supplemental information related to the offense. A group of directors from Plymouth will review this information and will make an assessment with the safety of the residents, staff, and community in mind.

Regarding drug-related offenses, KCHA will screen specifically for manufacture of meth, screening out convictions less than five years old. In line with the Housing First philosophy, Plymouth does not conduct additional screenings related to drug offenses.

## ON-SITE SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS

### 8. What is case management?

Case management is a process that connects residents with services and resources. Plymouth Case Managers get to know residents in order to help connect them with services that are tailored to each resident's individual needs, and may include: medical care, behavioral health treatment, veterans counseling, family reunification, money management programs, job search support, community activities, hospice care.

### 9. What other services will be provided onsite?

Plymouth's standard staffing model for new buildings includes:

- 4-5 Case Managers on-site Monday - Saturday
- Double-staffed front desk (Residential Specialists) 24/7
- Community Specialist
- Tenant Support Aide(s)
- Nurse's clinic with primary care provided weekly (3-4 days a week)
- Mental Health and substance-use disorder service offerings from Plymouth's integrated Behavioral Health team

### 10. Are residents required to utilize these services? If not, why not?

Plymouth's housing is not conditional on service utilization, as residents are tenants of Plymouth Housing and have rights to their apartment per standard lease terms.

However, Plymouth's service team proactively engages all residents to meet their needs and does assertive outreach to any resident with behaviors that impact the community. They complete an Individual Service Plan with each resident upon move-in that is updated annually and includes continuous service engagement at regular intervals throughout the year. They also coordinate closely with any outside service providers who have established history with residents and provide ongoing care.

### 11. When / how much staffing will be available onsite?

Supportive services are typically offered during regular business hours, but there is always a member of Plymouth's Permanent Supportive Housing staff on call to respond to any emerging needs at the building. In addition to the team available during daytime hours, most buildings have support staff on-site in the evenings and through the weekend. Their supportive services include case management, service connection, community building, and resource provision.

## POPULATION SERVICED, INCLUDING REFERRAL PROCESS

### 12. Who are the potential tenants of this building, and how was that determined?

Eligibility for Kenmore Supportive Housing will include:

- Income of 30% or less of Area Median Income (\$28,800/year in 2023)
  - "Homeless at Entry", including "couch surfing", living in transitional housing, staying in a shelter, living outside, and being at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
- Single adults with no children

This project will adhere to KCHA requirements of a form of valid identification, proof of U.S. Residency status, and a criminal record screening. Lifetime registered sex offenders and individuals with certain past drug-related convictions will not be eligible for this housing.

This development will receive project-based housing vouchers from KCHA, which means resident rent will be capped at 30% of their income. Those vouchers will require that all residents be at or below 30% AMI and have a documented disability. The vouchers do not require any additional demographic restrictions; the goal for this development is to primarily house seniors, and also include veterans and people with disabilities that may not qualify as seniors (55+).

### **13. What does “imminent risk of homelessness” mean?**

As defined by HUD, “imminent risk of homelessness” means an individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; no subsequent residence has been identified; and the individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Note: Includes individuals and families who are within 14 days of losing their housing, including housing they own, rent, are sharing with others, or are living in without paying rent.

### **14. What is the process for Plymouth to prove resident eligibility? What are the steps in the lease up process that residents will be required to go through?**

In order to live at Plymouth, an applicant must be found eligible for the building, unit, and subsidy. Upon referral, the applicant would meet with rental staff and complete an application for our funding sources and the housing authority. Questions relate to identity, citizen status, income and assets, criminal history, and homeless history.

Once eligibility has been determined, coordination for a move-in date takes place. During lease-up, residents sign their lease and receive orientation around rules and expectations, and Plymouth building staff work to establish rapport with the resident.

### **15. What are the options to further define the tenant population?**

#### **a. Referral sources – can this include broad human service agencies, or just homelessness/shelter providers?**

Yes, Plymouth and the City can absolutely set up referral partnerships and can work with broad human services agencies that serve homeless people. This tie to homelessness is core to both the mission and the funder contracts.

#### **b. “Categorical Population” determinations – Can we restrict (via capital contract) things like age? Veteran status?**

Capital contracts, or agreements with funders, can (within limits) introduce additional requirements for occupants, such as 55+ or similar. Without these contracts or agreements, Plymouth would be setting up exclusive screening criteria, which is prohibited by the [Fair Housing Act](#).

### **16. Can City of Kenmore residents (or former residents) have priority for this housing?**

Plymouth Housing, like other landlords, cannot deny tenancy to a potential resident due to geographic location, as this could be considered a violation of the [Fair Housing Act](#). While people living outside of Kenmore are not outwardly defined as a “protected class,” the law is very broad and has been interpreted

to include preferential treatment for certain groups (such as individuals who currently live near the building).

However, under the law, Plymouth is allowed to affirmatively market to Kenmore residents, as well as work with local service providers to cultivate interest for qualified tenants. Plymouth has been successful in housing residents who currently reside in the community surrounding the building. For instance, at Plymouth Crossing in Bellevue, Plymouth was able to successfully house a majority of residents with existing ties to Bellevue or the Eastside. They will implement a similar strategy in Kenmore, including marketing to seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Once a development agreement is in place, Plymouth will begin developing and executing a Memorandum of Understanding with Hopelink, Mary's Place, Lake City Partners, the Kenmore Senior Center, Center for Human Services, and other services providers in the Northshore area.

Connecting qualified residents, including those living in the manufactured home communities, to the local service providers that will work with Plymouth is critical, and the City has an important role to play here in outreach. Looking forward to 2025 when this building begins moving towards leasing up, this will be one of the top workplan priorities for the Housing and Human Services Manager.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**17. Is it possible for a registered sex offender to live in this building? How will residents be screened specific to this as part of the lease up process and how often will the residents be re-screened? Can the City required bi-annual screening and inclusion into lease language that admission into the sex offender registry is cause for eviction?**

See response to Question 7 (above) regarding screening at the time of application. Residents do not undergo re-screening.

**18. Will there be building rules and how will they be enforced?**

Plymouth's building is an apartment building first and foremost with the addition of supportive services. As an apartment building, they must abide by all landlord-tenant laws put forth by the federal government. Residents are responsible for abiding by their lease, following building rules, and ensuring the health and safety of themselves, Plymouth staff, and neighbors.

Plymouth has a no-weapons policy, including in cars. Quiet hours and respecting the property are within the lease. There is a robust guest policy so they can track who's coming and going. And when needed, they do establish guest bans.

Plymouth is a Housing First agency, which means they work to provide services and support to their residents so that they can adhere to their leases and maintain their housing. They rely on a team of Safety Ambassadors who travel to all their buildings to ensure safety and security. They utilize a trauma-informed care approach with residents and work with law enforcement to prevent unwanted activity in and outside of their buildings.

In the event of an emergency, Plymouth does involve the authorities. Plymouth has a strong track record of maintaining good relationships with local emergency response teams, and they are in constant communication with residents regarding any behavioral issues.

Regarding legal substance use, Plymouth's harm reduction approach means permitting private use (like what can happen in any home) that does not interfere with the community. Dealing drugs or drug

trafficking is not permitted by the lease. If this were to occur, the resident would be served a legal notice and potentially evicted if unwilling to abide by the lease agreement.

Additionally, Plymouth’s Permanent Supportive Housing and behavioral health teams offer an array of options for those residents who are willing to pursue sobriety, including peer support groups and on-site and off-site recovery meetings. They also have a sponsored contingency management program that rewards residents for recovery-oriented behaviors such as being sober during random drug testing.

**19. Does the City have any recourse if there are issues at the property?**

Yes. The proposed “Good Neighbor Agreement,” or similar agreement, would outline any expectations for this property that exceed the typical expectations and/or legal obligations for operators of multi-family properties in Kenmore. This land will additionally be subject to a land covenant to require affordability and will be monitored by funders (including ARCH, who would be managing any funds donated by the City of Kenmore).

**20. What is a good neighbor agreement and what can it include?**

A “Good Neighbor Agreement,” or similar, can address operations, safety, and communications commitments related to the development.

**21. What measures are the City and Plymouth taking to ensure safety at this site?**

One benefit of the supportive housing operations is that there will be access to medical care on-site, and there is a plethora of data that show that these individuals will require less emergency response, hospital treatment, and hospital stays than they would if not housed in a building that provides supportive services.

The City will provide the same public safety to this neighborhood, building, and residents as it provides to the entire community. People are encouraged to call 911 or the non-emergency public safety number should they see something unsafe.

The City will provide the same policing and uphold the same safety protocols regarding drugs and alcohol as is provided throughout the community. Kenmore PSH residents are treated the same as any other tenant under Washington State landlord/tenant law and as such will have specific rights with regards to their leased space, which are consistent with the rights all tenants have throughout the city. As part of the lease agreement, Plymouth has a code of conduct that residents must agree to in order to remain housed at the facility.

Additionally, Plymouth will staff this site 24/7 and utilize cameras within common areas and outdoor spaces to ensure building rules are followed. Plymouth employs a team of Safety Ambassadors who travel to all their buildings to ensure safety and security. They utilize a trauma-informed care approach with residents and work with law enforcement to prevent unwanted activity in and outside of our buildings. The Kenmore Police Department and/or Regional Crisis Response will be a participant in the proposed Community Engagement Board.

**PROJECT FUNDING**

**22. Why is the City donating funds and land to this project?**

Affordable housing has been a stated high priority for City Council (#1 priority in 2021 and 2022, #2 in 2023, and #1 in 2024) and the City saw an opportunity to jumpstart the building of affordable housing units by contributing underutilized city-owned property and \$3.2 million in pandemic relief funds.

Understanding that affordable housing projects require multiple funding partners to be viable for a developer, the City “seeded” the project by committing the land and money, which in turn led to a commitment by A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) of an additional \$3.2 million from its Trust Fund. (ARCH is a coalition of 15 East King County cities and King County.) This commitment of resources from both the City and ARCH was a key reason why Plymouth responded to the RFP and why the project was able to get funded by many external sources including the National Housing Trust Fund, State Housing Trust Fund, a direct appropriation from the Legislature, and a 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit allocation, among other sources.

Without the City’s commitment of land and funds, it is incredibly unlikely that the other funding would have come together in the unprecedented way that it did.

**23. Why is this development required to serve people exiting homelessness, which includes people imminently at risk of homelessness?**

This is a requirement of the funding received from the Department of Commerce (National Housing Trust Fund and State Housing Trust Fund) and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (Low Income Housing Tax Credit), which account for roughly 75% of the total project funding.

**24. What are King County Housing Authority Vouchers and how do they impact population served?**

These vouchers allow Plymouth to cap rent received from tenants to 30% of their income. Plymouth will receive the vouchers through a process with KCHA that will culminate in what is called an “AHAP” agreement (Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payment) that will be signed at the closing of financing, which will take place in May if a development agreement is approved. The vouchers will be Project-Based vouchers (meaning, they are attached to the property, not the individual) and require that all residents be at or below 30% AML and have a documented disability. While the vouchers do not require any additional demographic restrictions, unless Council places additional demographic restrictions, the goal remains that this project be primarily senior housing, and also include veterans and people with disabilities that may not necessarily be considered seniors (55+).

## POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

**25. What modifications to the development proposal are not allowed and why?**

Changing the location and density (100 units) of this development is not possible. The funding for this project is tied to both of those items, and a change in either would require Plymouth to reapply for funding from the National Housing Trust Fund, State Housing Trust Fund and Washington State Housing Commission for its Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. These three funders comprise more than 75% of the funding for this development. The building already complies with City code related to building height.

## STATE AND COUNTY MANDATES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

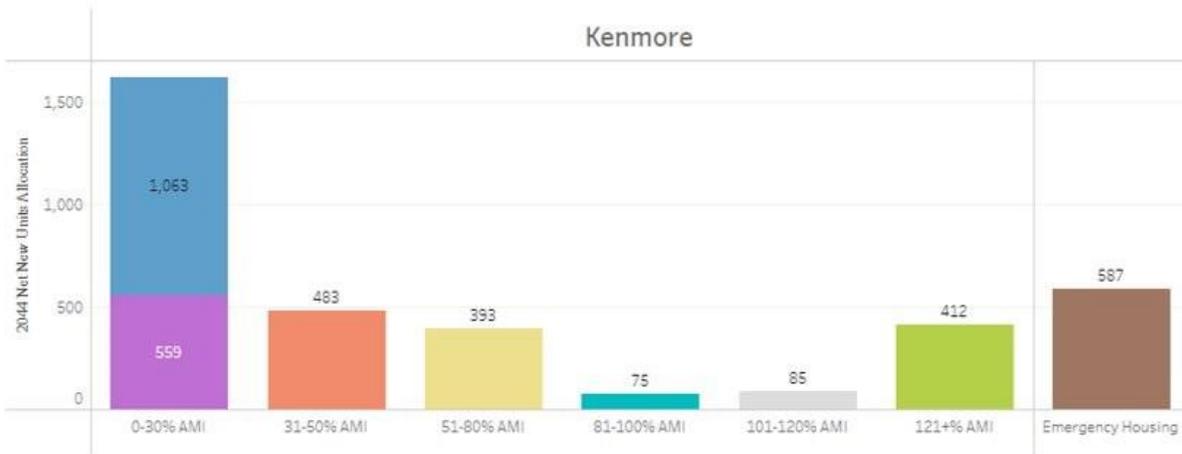
**26. What are the City’s goals related to affordable housing? Are we required to create a certain number of new low-income housing units? If so, where is that requirement from and what are the specifics? How would the requirement be enforced?**

House Bill 1220 (2021) amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) to instruct local governments to “plan for and accommodate” housing affordable to all income levels. This strengthened the previous goal, which was to encourage affordable housing. House Bill 1220 also directed the Department of Commerce to project future housing needs for jurisdictions by income bracket and also made updates to how jurisdictions plan for housing in the housing element of their comprehensive plans. Commerce

provided the information in 2023 and in fall of 2023, King County adopted [Ordinance 19660](#) to reflect that information in Countywide Planning Policies and created a dashboard for [King County Housing Needs](#).

On the second tab of the King County Housing Needs [dashboard](#), specific allocations for the City of Kenmore are available. This graphic is also pasted below. Note that in the 0-30% AMI band, the pink color is Permanent Supportive Housing.

The graphic below shows that Kenmore’s Jurisdictional allocation is just over 1,600 units at the 0-30% AMI level by 2044, 559 of which shall be Permanent Supportive Housing.



Data Notes: See Appendix 1 for Local Factors used.  
Produced by King County Department of Community and Human Services, Performance Measurement and Evaluation, March 3, 2023

Source: [King County Housing Needs Dashboard](#), Jurisdictional Housing Needs Allocations tab.

The City’s Comprehensive Plan must be consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies. Kenmore’s [Housing Element](#) of the Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2022, prior to these jurisdictional housing allocations. Further amendments to the Housing Element for consistency will be considered in 2024.

King County will monitor compliance with each jurisdiction’s actions to plan for and accommodate its share of the countywide housing need, as outlined in sections H-27 to H-29 of the ordinance. Monitoring will be reviewed every five years, and “*Jurisdictions with significant shortfalls shall identify and implement actions to address the shortfalls, such as amending the Comprehensive Plan, land use regulations, or other legislative or administrative actions. Implementation of this policy shall be coordinated with the requirement in RCW 36.70A.130(9)(c) to produce and take actions pursuant to a five-year implementation progress report.*” (section H-29, page 14).

## BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

### 27. If the City approves the requested design deviations will this set a precedent for future downtown projects?

Kenmore Municipal Code (KMC) section 18.52 provides guidance on design standards while including flexibility for alternative designs. Design deviations proposed under the Development Agreement (“DA”) are considered by the City Council. Since all DAs are different (e.g., different code deviations), this project isn’t setting a precedent for downtown design standards or future construction. In this way, DAs are similar to a variance process.

### 28. Will Plymouth Housing submit a design narrative and detailed plans that describe how the proposed design is superior to code required design?

Design deviations proposed under the DA are not required to demonstrate a superior design aesthetic. Instead, the deviation must be offset by a benefit of equal or greater value relative to the departure requested.

**29. What does the utility easement agreement for the property say about tree planting along the north property line? Will a green screen be proposed in lieu of trees?**

Landscaping is reviewed under the permit. Typically, Northshore Utility District (NUD) easements prohibit any structures, large trees, etc. in the easement. In this instance, the easement agreement only prevents “building or structures” from being placed within the easement. The project will be reviewed by the planner as part of the permitting process to ensure compliance with landscape standards. Note that the landscape chapter does provide alternative landscape options.

**30. I have heard that there may be a mural and/or public art. Will there be a public process for public art?**

The mural is a potential solution to meet the blank wall design standards. In lieu of a painted mural, some developments use wall-mounted art (affixed to the exterior of a building), vertical gardens (succulent exterior wall panels), light panels, etc. The design standards do not require a public process.

**31. Does the City consider the 67<sup>th</sup> Ave NE intersection to be a future pedestrian bridge location?**

The northwest quadrant circulation plan (KMC 18.52.110) shows a pedestrian bridge across SR 522, although the location is to be determined. This plan is a guiding principle; it doesn't require any project to include a pedestrian bridge. The City has no current plans for the pedestrian bridge.