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2 **COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT**

3 **INTRODUCTION**

4 **Purpose**

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

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

15 **Countywide Planning Policies**

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

20 **BACKGROUND**

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

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

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

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

4 **COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICY**

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

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

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

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

- 22 • Downtown Kenmore as a Countywide mixed-use activity center with high density and intensity
23 infill development
- 24 • Kenmore as a vibrant waterfront community that is connected both visually and physically to
25 its waterfront
- 26 • Promotion of alternate modes of travel, and streetscape/landscape improvements
- 27 • Site design reflecting natural characteristics
- 28 • Compatibility in style and scale between uses of different intensities
- 29 • Emphasis on increasing vegetation in the community
- 30 • Compatible residential development standards.

- 31 • Promote inclusivity and sense of belonging through design.

- 32 • Site design that protects the natural environment to meet climate action goals.

1 To address most of the issues, particularly for larger or higher intensity developments, a key
2 program is the design review process in Downtown Kenmore and high visibility areas. Design
3 Standard Areas are identified along the SR-522 corridor, as well as to the north along both 68th
4 Avenue NE and 73rd Avenue north to approximately NE 185th Street. The purpose and intent of
5 the design review process is to create a community that has attractive, functional, and enduring
6 buildings and places, to create pedestrian-oriented mixed use areas, and to encourage green
7 infrastructure.

8 **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

9 Following are the community design goals, objectives and policies. In some cases, policies are
10 cross-referenced in more than one Element or Element, and this is noted by a policy reference in
11 italics (e.g., *Policy CD-4.5.6*).

12 **GOAL 7. INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S CONNECTION TO THE WATERFRONT.**

13 **OBJECTIVE 7.1 Maintain, enhance, and protect view corridors to Lake Washington and the** 14 **Sammamish River.**

15 Policy CD-7.1.1 Identify important public view corridors to Lake Washington and the
16 Sammamish River. Methods to retain existing views include, but are not
17 limited to:

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

25 Policy CD-7.1.2 Evaluate alternative development regulations and tools to maintain and
26 enhance public view corridors to Lake Washington and the Sammamish
27 River. Methods to maintain and enhance view corridors include, but are
28 not limited to:

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

1 **OBJECTIVE 7.2** **Maintain and enhance the public’s ability to physically access and visually**
2 **access the Lake Washington and Sammamish River waterfronts.**

3 Policy CD-7.2.1 Consistent with the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element, establish
4 and implement plans, development policies, regulations, and incentives to
5 provide increased public access to the waterfront.

6
7 **GOAL 8. PROVIDE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, OPEN SPACE, AND**
8 **VEGETATION.**

9 **OBJECTIVE 8.1** **Protect and reduce impacts to natural and environmentally critical areas,**
10 **open space, trees, vegetation, natural terrain, and drainage.**

11 Policy CD-8.1.1 Through development standards, protect wetlands, streams and lakes,
12 retaining habitat value and flood control. Ensure development is designed
13 to be responsive to the environment.

14 Policy CD-8.1.2 Through density and development guidelines, minimize development in
15 environmentally sensitive areas such as landslide, erosion, seismic and
16 flood hazard areas.

17 Policy CD-8.1.3 During development review, encourage use of natural terrain and drainage,
18 and native plants and landscaping to minimize erosion and promote the
19 efficient use of renewable resources, water and energy.

20 Policy CD-8.1.4 Promote the adequate provision of peripheral and internal open space and
21 recreation uses in new development, including trails and parks.

22 **OBJECTIVE 8.2** **Integrate landscaping into streetscapes and developments and increase**
23 **the biomass in the community.**

24 Policy LU 8.2.1 Continue to require tree management and protection plans for
25 development and redevelopment proposals in Kenmore.

26 Policy CD-8.2.2 Include requirements in development regulations to increase vegetation
27 such as perimeter landscaping, parking stall/tree ratios, maximum
28 impervious surface ratios, and other techniques. Consider incentives, such
29 as density bonuses, to provide additional usable landscaped areas.

30 Policy CD-8.2.3 Require developments to retain exceptional trees and include substantial
31 landscape materials to achieve noticeable biomass.

32 **OBJECTIVE 8.3** **Encourage cluster residential development along with open space for**
33 **efficient service delivery and greater environmental protection.**

34 Policy CD-8.3.1 In development regulations consider allowing lot size averaging, lot
35 clustering, flexible setback requirements, and other techniques to protect
36 environmentally sensitive areas or to achieve greater neighborhood
37 compatibility. Requirements should include that when these techniques are

1 used, the development should be consistent with development surrounding
2 the site.

3 **GOAL 9. PROMOTE THE EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS AND**
4 **LESSEN THE RELIANCE ON THE AUTOMOBILE.**

5 **OBJECTIVE 9.1 Create a safe, comfortable, expedient, accessible and attractive**
6 **circulation system considering vehicles, emergency access, pedestrians,**
7 **and bicycles where possible.**

8 Policy CD-9.1.1 Adopt street design and construction standards that, in addition to
9 facilitating vehicular access, also:

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

16 **OBJECTIVE 9.2 Promote development which encourages non-single occupant vehicle**
17 **travel and alternate modes of transportation.**

18 Policy CD-9.2.1 Promote mixed-use development to reduce vehicle travel between land
19 uses, particularly in the Downtown districts.

20 Policy CD-9.2.2 Through development review, promote the appropriate location of parking
21 areas to facilitate non-automobile travel.

22 Policy CD-9.2.3 Require new development and redevelopment proposals to provide
23 pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing trails, community facilities
24 and services, transit, schools and the surrounding neighborhood.

25 Policy CD-9.2.4 Ensure zoning and subdivision regulations facilitate the creation of useable
26 open space, community facilities and nonmotorized access. Pedestrian
27 mobility should be prioritized and the impact of automobiles on the
28 character of the neighborhood reduced.

29 Policy CD-9.2.5 Encourage a “park once downtown” to encourage multi-modal transit
30 options.

31 **OBJECTIVE 9.3 In addition to signage, create a system of visual cues on major streets,**
32 **transit routes, sidewalks, and trails that help lead users to destinations.**

33 Policy CD-9.3.1 Identify key local and regional destinations as follows:

- 34 a. State, County, and City parks and open spaces;

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2 **OBJECTIVE 10.2 Use design standards that promote pedestrian-scale development with**
3 **human-scale details and an orientation to the street.**

4 Policy CD-10.2.1 Encourage commercial, high density, and mixed-use developments to
5 incorporate features that are oriented to a human-scale such as upper
6 story setbacks, façade modulation, variety in building materials, benches,
7 street trees, plazas, projecting signs, canopies, street lamps, hanging
8 baskets, or other features.

9 Policy CD-10.2.2 In commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use districts, encourage building,
10 parking and site design treatments that accommodate pedestrians and
11 bicyclists as well as automobiles.

12 Policy CD-10.2.3 Through design guidelines or standards, encourage appropriate levels of
13 parking in commercial and mixed-use areas, as follows:

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

22 **OBJECTIVE 10.3 Encourage pedestrian-oriented street design.**

23 Policy CD-10.3.1 In coordination with the sidewalk priority system established in the
24 Transportation Element, promote sidewalks along arterials and local
25 streets, and sidewalk and path connections, where appropriate, to the off-
26 street non-motorized trail network. For safety and aesthetic purposes,
27 promote the use of landscaped buffers between curbs and sidewalks,
28 particularly along arterials. Ensure appropriate levels of illumination.
29 Encourage bus stops to have shelters and benches.

30 **OBJECTIVE 10.4 Encourage design and development that promotes public safety.**

31 Policy CD-10.4.1 Include “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” components in
32 site design guidelines for new development. Where appropriate,
33 techniques may include promoting mixed-use development, visibility of
34 activity areas from surrounding residences and uses, increased
35 pedestrian-level lighting, use of low fences, see-through landscaping,
36 visible building entrances, and other techniques.

37 Policy CD-10.4.2 Provide street, access, and signage standards that allow for quick
38 emergency vehicle responses.

1 **OBJECTIVE 10.5 Encourage sustainable design and development.**

2 Policy CD-10.5.1 Support green building.

3 **OBJECTIVE 10.6 Support existing neighborhoods.**

4 Policy CD-10.6.1 Consider establishing a matching grant fund for improvement projects
5 proposed by neighborhood or business groups.

6 Policy CD-10.6.2 Allow for neighborhood entry markers in sign regulations.

7 **GOAL 11. PROMOTE COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL**
8 **NEIGHBORHOODS.**

9 **OBJECTIVE 11.1 Prepare and implement development standards and regulations that**
10 **acknowledge neighborhood character.**

11 Policy CD-11.1.1 Consider amendments to permitted uses, lot and building dimensional
12 standards, street allowances, and other requirements to achieve
13 compatible development in single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use
14 districts.

15 Policy CD-11.1.2 Provide a variety of options such as driveways and joint-use driveways in a
16 manner that allows for integration of new development into existing
17 neighborhoods. Match improvement standards to the number of lots to be
18 served. Encourage the interconnection of the local street pattern.

19 **OBJECTIVE 11.2 Ensure that new housing is compatible with surrounding development in**
20 **scale and/or design, and provides adequate on-site parking.**

21 Policy CD-11.2.1 Ensure dwellings are designed in accordance with zoning code requirements
22 applied to achieve compatible housing patterns yet allow for individuality, as
23 well as improvement over time.

24 Policy CD-11.2.2 Develop and apply multi-family design guidelines and standards to achieve
25 quality development and compatibility with surrounding uses. Variation in
26 facades, roof lines, and other building design features should be used to give
27 a residential scale and identity to multi-family developments at the
28 development edge. Require multi-family residential development to provide
29 both common and private open space.

30 Policy CD-11.2.3 In design guidelines and standards, ensure the provision of common
31 facilities in multi-family developments, such as open space, internal
32 walkways, roads, parking, laundry rooms, solid waste and recycling areas,
33 and mailboxes.

34 Policy CD-11.2.4 Ensure multi-family parking standards address sufficient off-street parking
35 to accommodate residents and visitors.

GOAL 12. PRESERVE AND ENHANCE KENMORE’S UNIQUE IDENTITY AS AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE 12.1 Provide a community atmosphere that is inclusive and family-friendly, and that fosters a sense of belonging and pride.

Policy CD-12.1.1 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-12.1.2 Provide locations for public gatherings in civic and commercial developments where appropriate. (see *Policy CD-4.5.6*)

- Policy CD-12.1.3 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-12.1.4 Provide appropriate resources towards enforcing nuisance ordinances addressing junk cars, noxious weeds, and other blighting influences.

Policy CD-12.1.5 Provide appropriate resources towards building and zoning code enforcement to help ensure sufficient structure and site quality and maintenance.

OBJECTIVE 12.2 Maintain compatible development in residential neighborhoods.

Policy CD-12.2.1 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-12.2.2 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

1 should consider appropriate building form, location of activities on the site,
2 transitions and buffers as appropriate to achieve compatibility.

3 **OBJECTIVE 12.3 Seek to integrate development that protects environmental quality, and**
4 **enhances the community’s quality of life.**

5 Policy CD-12.3.1 Encourage the consolidation of land to achieve development that is
6 functional, attractive, and offers community amenities.

7 Policy CD-12.3.2 Require master plans for properties in the Public and Private Facilities land
8 use district, and for developments exceeding a size threshold in the
9 Downtown zones.

10 Policy CD-12.3.3 Ensure that developments protect environmentally sensitive areas and
11 develop design solutions that recognize natural features and cultural
12 resources (historic or archaeological) as site and community amenities.

13 **GOAL 12.4 WELCOME TRAVELERS AND RESIDENTS TO THE COMMUNITY**

14 **OBJECTIVE 12.4.1 Promote the development of primary gateways to the City through**
15 **development quality, design and landscape standards, land use**
16 **regulations, and street standards.**

- 17 Policy CD-12.4.1.1 Define the primary entrances to the City as follows:
- 18 a. The vicinity of the western city limits along Bothell Way;
 - 19 b. The vicinity of the eastern city limits along Bothell Way;
 - 20 c. The vicinity of the southern city limits along Juanita Drive;
 - 21 d. The vicinity of the southeastern city limits along Simonds
22 Road; and,
 - 23 e. The Kenmore Park & Ride.
 - 24 f. The Burke Gilman Trail.

25 Policy CD-12.4.1.2 Address secondary entrances to the City along arterials not listed in
26 Policy CD-12.1.1.1, as well as waterway entrances from Lake
27 Washington.

28

1 Policy CD-12.4.1.3 Define gateway entrances through coordinated streetscape
2 improvements such as gateway markers, landscaping, or other
3 methods.

4 Policy CD-12.4.1.4 Through land use and development regulations as well as strategic
5 investment, ensure quality development and infrastructure define
6 Kenmore.

7 **OBJECTIVE 12.4.2.1 Promote quality urban design and encourage street trees and vegetation**
8 **along SR-522.**

9 Policy CD-12.4.2.1 Apply design and signage regulations to commercial and mixed-use
10 developments along SR-522 addressing building size, orientation,
11 access points, linked parking areas, and other measures to ensure
12 noticeable, attractive visual appeal. Recognize the need for view
13 corridors to business signs

14 **GOAL 13.1 HONOR AND CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF KENMORE**

15 Policy CD-13.1.1.1 Collaborate with Kenmore Heritage Society to foster knowledge and
16 appreciation of the city's historical resources and heritage.

17
18 Policy CD-13.1.1.2 Participate with local, county, state, and national historical
19 organizations to educate Kenmore residents about the value of local
20 cultural and historical resources through educational and
21 informational exhibits, brochures, events, and the City's website.

22 Policy CD-13.1.1.3 Continue to collaborate with community partners to provide
23 information that interprets the history of Kenmore, including
24 historical displays, programs, activities, special events, landmark
25 plaques, and interpretive signage.

26 Policy CD-13.1.1.4 Support the preservation of historical buildings, such as the Kenmore
27 Community Clubhouse, former St. Edward Seminary (The Lodge at
28 St. Edward), and the Thomsen Estate, as well as other buildings and
29 sites with historical significance.

30
31 **GOAL 14.1 CELEBRATE COMMUNITY DIVERSITY AND PROMOTE CULTURAL AWARENESS**

32 Policy CD-14.1.1 Connect and partner with community, business, and social service
33 groups and organizations to celebrate the diversity and cultural
34 heritage of Kenmore.

35 Policy CD-14.1.2 Continue to facilitate city-wide, neighborhood, and community cultural
36 events.

37 Policy CD-14.1.3 Support programs which engage and educate residents and
38 community leaders about diversity and cultural awareness.

1 Policy CD-14.1.4 Continue ongoing implementation of the City’s Diversity, Equity,
2 Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan policies to educate and
3 foster a community of respect, equity, and mutual understanding.

4 **GOAL 15.1 SUPPORT ACCESS TO PERFORMANCE AND VISUAL ARTS IN KENMORE**

5 Policy CD-15.1.1 Collaborate with Arts of Kenmore to celebrate and integrate
6 projects and programming that reflect the interests of the
7 community.

8 Policy CD-15.1.2 Promote and sustain a vibrant creative community which helps
9 celebrate cultural heritage and strengthens community identity.

10 Policy CD-15.1.3 Expand Kenmore’s public art collection to include pieces and
11 programs that represent the cultural diversity of the community.

12

13 **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

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

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

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

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

- 25 • Community events sponsorships
- 26 • Capital infrastructure plans
- 27 • Nuisance/violation regulations and enforcement
- 28 • Development standards addressing neighborhood character and compatibility with
29 surrounding development
- 30 • Sign regulations
- 31 • Sidewalk standards
- 32 • Landscape standards
- 33 • Street standards
- 34 • Tree retention requirements
- 35 • Cluster development regulations.

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

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

9

10 **REFERENCES**

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

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