

COMMUNITY DESIGN SUB-ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Design Sub-Element is to guide future development and redevelopment of Kenmore so that it develops a vital urban center, protects environmental quality, protects its residential neighborhoods, promotes alternative modes of travel, and enhances the streetscape and landscape on all streets.

Countywide Planning Policies

The King County Countywide Planning Policies require jurisdictions to promote a high quality of design and site planning in publicly funded construction (such as civic buildings, parks, bridges, transit stops), and in private development.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

SR-522, which dominates Kenmore's Downtown corridor, is highly congested with regional automobile traffic. Included along its length are auto-oriented commercial establishments including gas stations, fast food restaurants, service stations, supermarkets, and other strip retail development. Parking lots and signs on tall poles dominate much of the appearance of the Downtown core area. Many buildings in this area are lacking a continuity of form and are set back from the street, often having parking lots separating them from the street. Typically, a paved shoulder with few sidewalks separates property adjacent to this roadway.

Most of the residential neighborhoods outside the SR-522 corridor were built after the 1970s, and one-third were built after 1990. With an average of 4 residential units to an acre, these neighborhoods with single-family homes are generally in good condition and are well maintained. Trees are lacking along major arterials and along many residential streets. Most streets lack sidewalks. As of 1999, the City had more than 230 mobile homes in five mobile home parks, as well as many mobile homes on single lots. Also, as of 1999, there are 28 apartment buildings, an estimated 494 condominium units, and 126 rental townhouse units in the City.

COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICY

The Vision for Kenmore is multi-faceted, addressing community pride, single-family neighborhood character protection, creation of a central place, enduring and attractive buildings and places, natural environment protection, an interconnected circulation system, and others. Although these concerns can be divided into separate topics and addressed in other Elements, as they are elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan, the Community Design Sub-Element goals, objectives, and policies are intended to bring together interrelated issues that affect the community atmosphere and physical presence. To that end, the policies provide design guidance, particularly addressing:

- Downtown Kenmore as a mixed-use activity center with high density and intensity infill development
- Promotion of alternate modes of travel, and streetscape/landscape improvements
- Site design reflecting natural characteristics
- Compatibility in style and scale between uses of different intensities

- Emphasis on increasing vegetation in the community
- Compatible residential development standards.

To address the large majority of the issues, particularly for larger or higher intensity developments, a key new local program would be a design review process in Downtown Kenmore, and high visibility areas.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

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

GOAL 7. *PRESERVE AND ENHANCE KENMORE’S SMALL-TOWN FEELING.*

OBJECTIVE 7.1 Provide a community atmosphere that is family-friendly, open to and values diversity, and creates a sense of belonging and pride.

Policy LU-7.1.1 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 LU-7.1.2 Provide locations for public gatherings in civic and commercial developments where appropriate. (*see Policy LU-4.5.6*)

Policy LU-7.1.3 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 LU-7.1.4 Provide appropriate resources towards enforcing nuisance ordinances addressing junk cars, noxious weeds, and other blighting influences.

Policy LU-7.1.5 Provide appropriate resources towards building and zoning code enforcement to help ensure sufficient structure and site quality and maintenance.

OBJECTIVE 7.2 Maintain smaller-scale development in residential neighborhoods.

- Policy LU-7.2.1 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 LU-7.2.2 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 should consider appropriate building form, location of activities on the site, transitions and buffers as appropriate to achieve compatibility.

OBJECTIVE 7.3 Seek to integrate large-scale development that protects environmental quality, and enhances the community's quality of life.

- Policy LU-7.3.1 Encourage the consolidation of land to achieve development that is functional, attractive, and offers community amenities.
- Policy LU-7.3.2 Require master plans for properties in the Public and Private Institution Zone, and for developments exceeding a size threshold in the Downtown zones.
- Policy LU-7.3.3 Ensure that large-scale developments protect environmentally sensitive areas and develop design solutions that recognize natural features and cultural resources (historic or archaeological) as site and community amenities.

GOAL 8. CREATE ATTRACTIVE, FUNCTIONAL, AND ENDURING BUILDINGS AND PLACES.

OBJECTIVE 8.1 Create a sense of place and identity for Kenmore while allowing for diversity.

- Policy LU-8.1.1 Through development quality, signage standards, landscape treatments, and public investment visible at community gateways and in a central Downtown, create a sense of identify and place for Kenmore.
- Policy LU-8.1.2 With input from Kenmore citizens and businesses, and using the assistance of qualified professionals, develop design standards consistent with the community vision, and establish a Design Review process. In particular, focus design review standards and guidelines towards Downtown as well as commercial and multi-family development Citywide. Ensure that provisions allow for creativity and flexibility while meeting common design principles. (*see Policy LU-4.5.1*)
- Policy LU-8.1.3 Based upon input from citizens and the business community, update sign regulations to achieve the following:
- a. Create hierarchy of signage sizes and types addressing regionally-oriented mixed-use and commercial districts and locally-oriented mixed-use and commercial districts;
 - b. Minimize sign clutter in business and mixed-use districts;

- c. Encourage signs which orient to non-motorists as well as motorists;
- d. Reduce the prevalence of billboards; and,
- e. Allow for sufficient visibility to support businesses.

Policy LU-8.1.4 Require screening of unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, storage areas, loading docks, and parking areas to minimize their visibility from adjacent properties, particularly residential districts, and from arterials. (*see Policy LU-4.5.5*)

OBJECTIVE 8.2 Use design standards that promote pedestrian-scale development with human-scale details and an orientation to the street.

Policy LU-8.2.1 Encourage commercial, high density, and mixed-use developments to incorporate features that are oriented to a human-scale such as upper story setbacks, façade modulation, variety in building materials, benches, street trees, plazas, projecting signs, canopies, street lamps, hanging baskets, or other features.

Policy LU-8.2.2 In commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use districts, encourage building, parking and site design treatments that accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists as well as automobiles.

Policy LU-8.2.3 Through design guidelines or standards, encourage appropriate levels of parking in commercial and mixed-use areas, as follows:

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

OBJECTIVE 8.3 Encourage pedestrian-oriented street design.

Policy LU-8.3.1 In coordination with the sidewalk priority system established in the Transportation Element, promote sidewalks along arterials and local streets, and sidewalk and path connections, where appropriate, to the off-street non-motorized trail network. For safety and aesthetic purposes, promote the use of landscaped buffers between curbs and sidewalks, particularly along arterials. Ensure appropriate levels of illumination. Encourage bus stops to have shelters and benches.

OBJECTIVE 8.4 Encourage design and development that promotes public safety.

Policy LU-8.4.1 Include “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” components in site design guidelines for new development. Where appropriate, techniques may include promoting mixed-use development, visibility of activity areas from

surrounding residences and uses, increased pedestrian-level lighting, use of low fences, see-through landscaping, visible building entrances, and other techniques.

Policy LU-8.4.2 Provide street, access, and signage standards that allow for quick emergency vehicle responses.

OBJECTIVE 8.5 Support existing neighborhoods.

Policy LU-8.5.1 Consider establishing a matching grant fund for improvement projects proposed by neighborhood or business groups.

Policy LU-8.5.2 Allow for neighborhood entry markers in sign regulations.

GOAL 9. PROMOTE COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

OBJECTIVE 9.1 Prepare and implement development standards and regulations that acknowledge neighborhood character.

Policy LU-9.1.1 Consider amendments to permitted uses, lot and building dimensional standards, street allowances, and other requirements to achieve compatible development in single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use districts.

Policy LU-9.1.2 Provide a variety of options such as driveways and joint-use driveways in a manner that allows for integration of new development into existing neighborhoods. Match improvement standards to the number of lots to be served. Encourage the interconnection of the local street pattern.

OBJECTIVE 9.2 Ensure that new housing is compatible with surrounding development in scale and/or design, and provides adequate on-site parking.

Policy LU-9.2.1 Ensure single-family dwellings are designed in accordance with zoning code requirements applied to achieve compatible housing patterns yet allow for individuality, as well as improvement over time.

Policy LU-9.2.2 Develop and apply multi-family design guidelines and standards to achieve quality development and compatibility with surrounding uses. Variation in facades, roof lines, and other building design features should be used to give a residential scale and identity to multi-family developments at the development edge. Require multi-family residential development to provide both common and private open space.

Policy LU-9.2.3 In design guidelines and standards, ensure the provision of common facilities in multi-family developments, such as open space, internal walkways, roads, parking, laundry rooms, solid waste and recycling areas, and mailboxes.

Policy LU-9.2.4 Ensure multi-family parking standards address sufficient off-street parking to accommodate residents and visitors.

GOAL 10. PROVIDE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, OPEN SPACE, AND VEGETATION.**OBJECTIVE 10.1 Protect natural and environmentally sensitive areas, open space, trees, vegetation, natural terrain, and drainage.**

Policy LU-10.1.1 Through development standards, protect wetlands, streams and lakes, retaining habitat value and flood control. Ensure development is designed to be responsive to the environment.

Policy LU-10.1.2 Through density and development guidelines, minimize development in environmentally sensitive areas such as landslide, erosion, seismic and flood hazard areas.

Policy LU-10.1.3 During development review, encourage use of natural terrain and drainage, and indigenous landscaping to minimize erosion and promote the efficient use of renewable resources, water and energy.

Policy LU-10.1.4 Promote the adequate provision of peripheral and internal open space and recreation uses in new development, including trails and parks.

Policy LU-10.1.5 Promote preservation of existing and provision of new view corridors, consistent with the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element, particularly Objectives 39.4 and 39.5 and their associated policies.

OBJECTIVE 10.2 Integrate landscaping into streetscapes and developments, and increase the biomass in the community.

Policy LU 10.2.1 Continue to require tree retention plans for development and redevelopment proposals in Kenmore.

Policy LU-10.2.2 Include requirements in development regulations to increase vegetation such as providing perimeter landscaping, parking stall/tree ratios, maximum impervious surface ratios, and other techniques. Consider incentives, such as density bonuses, to provide additional usable landscaped areas.

Policy LU-10.2.3 Require development to retain substantial trees and include substantial landscape materials to achieve noticeable biomass.

OBJECTIVE 10.3 Encourage cluster residential development along with open space for efficient service delivery and greater environmental protection.

Policy LU-10.3.1 In development regulations consider allowing lot size averaging, lot clustering, flexible setback requirements, and other techniques to protect environmentally sensitive areas or to achieve greater neighborhood compatibility. Requirements should include that when these techniques are used, the development should be consistent with development surrounding the site.

GOAL 11. WELCOME TRAVELERS AND RESIDENTS TO THE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE 11.1 Promote the development of primary entrances to the City as gateways to the community through development quality, design and landscape standards, land use regulations, and street standards.

Policy LU-11.1.1 Define the primary entrances to the City as follows:

- a. The vicinity of the western city limits along Bothell Way;
- b. The vicinity of the eastern city limits along Bothell Way;
- c. The vicinity of the southern city limits along Juanita Drive;
- d. The vicinity of the southeastern city limits along Simonds Road; and,
- e. The future Downtown transit hub.

Policy LU-11.1.2 Address secondary entrances to the City along arterials not listed in Policy LU-11.1.1, as well as entrances from Lake Washington.

Policy LU-11.1.3 Define gateway entrances through coordinated streetscape improvements such as gateway markers, landscaping, or other methods.

Policy LU-11.1.4 Through land use and development regulations as well as strategic investment, ensure quality development and infrastructure define Kenmore.

OBJECTIVE 11.2 Promote quality urban design and vegetated boulevard treatments along SR-522.

Policy LU-11.2.1 Implement the City-sponsored SR-522 Design Report prepared in conjunction with WSDOT. The plan includes sidewalk improvements, a median, and landscape standards.

Policy LU-11.2.2 Apply design and signage regulations to commercial and mixed-use developments along SR-522 addressing building size, orientation, access points, linked parking areas, and other measures to ensure noticeable, attractive visual appeal. Recognize the need for view corridors to business signs.

GOAL 12. PROMOTE THE EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS AND LESSEN THE RELIANCE ON THE AUTOMOBILE.

OBJECTIVE 12.1 Create a safe, comfortable, expedient, accessible and attractive circulation system considering vehicles, emergency access, pedestrians, and bicycles where possible.

Policy LU-12.1.1 Adopt street design and construction standards that, in addition to facilitating vehicular access, also:

- a. Allow emergency vehicle access 24 hours a day;

- b. Allow for the development of a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network;
- c. Encourage transit and non-single occupant vehicle travel; and,
- d. Address aesthetic and environmental characteristics as well as function and safety.

OBJECTIVE 12.2 Promote development which encourages non-single occupant vehicle travel and alternate modes of transportation.

- Policy LU-12.2.1 Promote mixed-use development to reduce vehicle travel between land uses, particularly in the Downtown districts.
- Policy LU-12.2.2 Through development review, promote the appropriate location of parking areas to facilitate non-automobile travel.
- Policy LU-12.2.3 Require new development and redevelopment proposals to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing trails, community facilities and services, transit, schools and the surrounding neighborhood.
- Policy LU-12.2.4 Ensure zoning and subdivision regulations facilitate the creation of useable open space, community facilities and nonmotorized access. Pedestrian mobility should be prioritized and the impact of automobiles on the character of the neighborhood reduced.

OBJECTIVE 12.3 In addition to signage, create a system of visual cues on major streets, transit routes, sidewalks, and trails that help lead users to destinations.

- Policy LU-12.3.1 Identify key local and regional destinations as follows:
 - a. State, County, and City parks and open spaces;
 - b. Neighborhood, Community, Regional, and Downtown commercial districts;
 - c. Public and Private educational facilities;
 - d. Transit centers; and,
 - e. Government facilities including City Hall, Northshore Utility District Headquarters, Fire Stations, Police Stations, Library, Community Centers, and others
- Policy LU-12.3.2 Create a hierarchy of tree and vegetation standards, signs, light standards, public art, kiosks, or other features to direct users to key destinations. Apply these visual cues to the arterials, off-street trail network, and key local and regional destinations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

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

- Strategies to promote housing reinvestment
- Design guidelines and a design review process
- Downtown redevelopment incentives
- Matching grant funds for community projects
- Community gateway standards
- Master plan requirements for the Public/Private Institution Zones.

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

- Community events sponsorships
- Capital infrastructure plans
- Nuisance/violation regulations and enforcement
- Development standards addressing neighborhood character and compatibility with surrounding development
- Sign regulations
- Sidewalk standards
- Landscape standards
- Street standards
- Tree retention requirements
- Cluster development regulations.

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

- Coordination with WSDOT regarding improvements and access along SR-522.

REFERENCES

City of Kenmore (1999). Draft Comprehensive Plan Inventory. Kenmore, WA.

King County Growth Management Planning Council (December 31, 1995). Countywide Planning Policies. Seattle, WA.