



Northwest

CITY OF KENMORE



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT | FEBRUARY 2024

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ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

Learn more at americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/.

Distinct from Advisory Services panels, TAPs leverage local expertise through a half-day to two-day process.

ULI Advisory Services: District Council Programs

The goal of the ULI Advisory Services program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 2006, the ULI Northwest's technical assistance panel (TAP) program has assembled over 25 ULI-member teams in service of ULI's mission to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Drawing from its local membership base, ULI Northwest conducts one-and-a-half-day TAPs offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. In fulfillment of ULI's mission, this technical assistance report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About ULI Northwest

ULI Northwest is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research organization supported by its members. ULI Northwest carries out the ULI mission locally by serving as the preeminent real estate forum in the Pacific Northwest, facilitating the open exchange of ideas, information, and experiences among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sometimes referred to as “the crown of Lake Washington”, the City of Kenmore is perched atop Lake Washington and affords a high quality of life convenient to several major employment centers. The city is updating its 2003 Downtown Plan aiming to continue investment toward fostering a distinctive identity, particularly within its Downtown area. Embracing its waterfront location and the inherent quality of life it offers, Kenmore recognizes the importance of well-conceived growth anchored by an identity of place that resonates with its residents and businesses. Fully realizing this potential necessitates advance planning, a long-term vision, and gathering and embracing perspectives from the community.

Partly because of Kenmore's central location and convenient accessibility, Kenmore faces the challenge of being a “drive-thru” community, rather than a “drive-to” destination. While its proximity

to essential services and amenities attracts prospective residents, the presence of SR-522 makes for an automobile-centric thoroughfare through the downtown area. Residents frequently seek leisure and entertainment options in neighboring municipalities like Bothell and Woodinville.

To address these challenges, Kenmore could benefit from focused development of social, physical, and economic infrastructure. Strategically building new infrastructure aimed at leveraging Kenmore's strengths and assets could significantly build on and contribute to a distinct sense of place. The Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) identified three key categories of infrastructure for focused development: social, physical, and economic. Social infrastructure enhancements would foster community connections and a sense of belonging; physical improvements

would ensure seamless navigation for visitors; and economic infrastructure initiatives would support thriving businesses to facilitate future growth. Recommendations are presented in these three categories, but there is also overlap. When the City implements recommendations across these categories, it will have a reinforcing effect that will boost efficacy and success.

Social infrastructure:

- Amplify, Expand, Connect Your Assets
- Arts Activation and Community Hub
- Programming and Place Management
- Wayfinding and Business Support

Physical infrastructure:

- Reforest Kenmore
- The Green Loop
- 522 Bridge

Economic infrastructure:

- Infill Development Incentives, Permits, and Regulation Certainty
- Invest in Yourself; Programs and Placemaking; Constraint Research
- Strategic Parcel Identification and Support

Key Question:

How can the city attract investment to make Kenmore residents proud, as well as draw others to Kenmore to share in what it has to offer? How can the city be made a destination; a place that gives the Kenmore community a reason to stay and spend time?

ULI's TAP panelists made recommendations to the City of Kenmore to achieve its objectives and tackle four key questions:

1. How does the city 'jump-start' the next phase of the Downtown Plan?
2. Why is the City of Kenmore being left behind with regards to development investment compared to our neighbors (i.e., Bothell, Woodinville)?
3. What tools and partnership opportunities may the city consider to leverage public/private investment in Downtown?
4. How does the City incentivize and inspire long-time property owners in seeing the vision for Downtown Kenmore and allow for redevelopment?



BACKGROUND

Nestled along the northern shore of Lake Washington in near proximity to communities such as Lake Forest Park, Bothell, and Kirkland, Kenmore officially became a city on August 31, 1998. Boasting an estimated population of 24,488 as of September 2023 with approximately 9,600 households, the median age in Kenmore is 41.3 and the median household income is approximately \$121,000 compared with \$110,000 in King County. Kenmore is known as a residential, family-oriented city with a great quality of life that serves partly as a bedroom community to Seattle and east side employment centers and also supports several thousand jobs within the City limits. Like many of the communities around Kenmore, housing affordability is a major issue, and many workers that support businesses in Kenmore live in other communities with more attainable housing. With its picturesque lakefront locale, residents enjoy a plethora of recreational and social pursuits. Whether it's running or cycling along the scenic Burke-Gilman Trail, exploring an array of parks, or sampling the delights of Brewery Row, Kenmore provides opportunities for residents to forge connections, unwind, and savor a rewarding lifestyle.

History

The earliest known residents of this area were the Sts'-ahp-absh people who wintered in at the junction of the Sammamish River and Lake Washington. In the early 1900s, Kenmore, named after a Scottish town, attracted loggers who moved timber by skid and rail bound for mills down the lake. It soon burgeoned into a small settlement centered around a Shingle Mill. The establishment of SR-522, the primary thoroughfare traversing the north side of Lake Washington in 1910, played a pivotal role in Kenmore's development, enticing travelers to pause and partake in its offerings. With its array of eateries, roadhouses, and dance halls, Kenmore quickly gained renown for whiskey in the prohibition era. In 1946, the founding of Kenmore Air on the North shore of Lake Washington further solidified the area's position as a hub for tourism. Over time, Kenmore evolved into a bustling transportation nexus, catering to road, rail, water, and air transit. During the 1950s, the advent of the drive-in theater and library added to Kenmore's allure, cementing its status as a destination. Today, Kenmore stands as a vibrant community, boasting thousands of employment opportunities and a convenient residential haven.

Soon after the City was incorporated in 1998, City Leaders created a vision for Kenmore's comprehensive plan: "A community with an attractive, vital, pedestrian-oriented city center offering commercial, civic cultural and park spaces, integrated with higher-density housing." With this vision, the City Council adopted the 2003 Downtown Plan spurring public investment, development, and growth shaping Kenmore's urban landscape. Central to this vision was the revitalization of a downtown intersection off SR-522, strategically leveraging

this major thoroughfare to enhance accessibility and draw visitors into the heart of the city. By positioning the downtown hub in proximity to SR-522, the city aimed to cultivate a dynamic energy that would drive growth.

Public investments, including the construction of City Hall in 2010, a new fire station in 2011, and redevelopment of the Kenmore Library, played a crucial role in anchoring Kenmore's civic presence and establishing a central focal point. Additionally, the city partnered to develop Town Square and The Hangar, completed in 2017, further bolstering the community serving as gathering spaces reflective of Kenmore's aviation heritage. These initiatives spurred private sector investment, leading to the emergence of mixed-use retail and residential developments like Flyway, Linq Lofts and Flats, and Spencer 68.

The 2003 Downtown Plan outlined strategies for infrastructure improvements, property acquisition, and development. Initiatives such as bicycle lanes and sidewalk enhancements aimed to create safer pedestrian and cyclist experiences, while land acquisition provided opportunities for future development.

Moreover, the plan introduced design standards to activate storefronts for pedestrians and emphasized the retention of existing businesses while attracting new ones. Now, with the initial phase of the downtown plan implemented, the city is poised to evaluate and embark on the next phase of downtown planning, reflecting its ongoing commitment to vibrant urban development.



PICTURED: KENMORE CITY HALL, CITY OF KENMORE WEBSITE

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

To gain understanding of the Kenmore community, the panel conducted stakeholder interviews and categorized the feedback to create a community-centric vision, and gain understanding of opportunities and challenges

Community Vision

Based on Stakeholder Interviews

“In downtown Kenmore, we envision a bustling hub where small businesses thrive and residents flourish. We dream of vibrant, safe streets alive with diverse shops and activities for young and old, fostering a strong sense of community for all who call it home, and a memorable experience for visitors.”

Assets and Successes

Distinctive attributes that define Kenmore’s character:

- Kenmore is known for having a high quality of life, and especially for being family-friendly.
- Kenmore residents value art, entertainment, services, and nature, and would like more of those locally and better access to them.
- Downtown has a variety of small, local, and BIPOC businesses with both local and regional appeal, though they are physically disconnected from each other.
- Existing multi-family housing in and near downtown is attractive and well-maintained. There is significant housing capacity either under construction or in planning stages.
- Recent public investments like the Hangar, City Hall, the Library, and the fire station demonstrate renewed investment in the area and add vibrancy.
- Public realm improvements like the pedestrian and bike trails on 68th are seen as a success.
- Development reflects Kenmore’s market position in the Puget Sound reflected in its population and employment densities and relative proximity to other larger urban centers. (Kenmore is not being “left behind.”)

Challenges

Challenges to developing a vibrant “magnetized” downtown Kenmore:

- Downtown parking is a source of strife.
- The downtown core is auto-oriented, which detracts from its walkability.
- Downtown Kenmore does not have a coherent visual identity and its beauty does not match the city’s beautiful natural context.
- Downtown lacks visibility from auto and bus traffic passing on 522 and from significant bike traffic passing on the Burke Gilman regional trail.
- Connections are compromised across 522 to the lake, parks, the Burke Gilman trail, the brewery district, and institutions like Bastyr and St. Edward’s Lodge.
- Proximity to the noise and traffic of SR 522 presents obvious challenges to a more tranquil urban center.
- Lakepointe is a generational development opportunity for dense urban development, but stakeholders are unclear on the relationship between downtown development and the future plans for Lakepointe.
- Small lot sizes downtown have proved an obstacle to catalyzing larger developments, and many current downtown landowners don’t see themselves as a part of the City’s long-term vision for downtown.
- Residents and other stakeholders are skeptical of grand plans for downtown after seeing previous master plans and development deals falter.



PHOTO SOURCE: CITY OF KENMORE WEBSITE

KENMORE SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Superior quality of life
- Family-friendly nature
- Vibrant, connected community
- Small businesses with local and regional appeal.
- Residents value art, entertainment, services, nature, recreation.
- Influx of projects shows Kenmore's willingness to evolve and provide for growth and change.
- Multi-family housing in and near the downtown looks attractive and well-maintained.
- Public realm improvements such as pedestrian and bike trails on 68th Avenue NE proved successful.

WEAKNESSES

- Parking, parking management
- Walkability
- Aesthetics
- Connecting the city, cohesion; The current visual of the Downtown does not parallel the beauty of the natural surroundings

OPPORTUNITIES

- Considerable growth in housing capacity with projects under construction or in the planning stages
- SR-522 remains an opportunity for increased visibility and attention to Kenmore.
- Public acquisition of land for leverage and development

THREATS

- Downtown core's auto-oriented nature detracts from the walkability.
- Shifting to walkability poses a challenge as parking downtown is a source of strife for the community.
- Small parcels pose a challenge to assemble anything meaningful.
- SR-522 threatens walkability, and Kenmore's sense of place



Recommendations

Expanding upon the foundation laid by the 2003 downtown plan, the panel proposed zeroing in on promising investment and redevelopment avenues, with emphasis on:

1. Social Infrastructure
2. Physical Infrastructure
3. Economic Infrastructure

Investment in these aspects of infrastructure will bolster community connectivity, optimize urban functionality, and stimulate economic growth, aligning with the overarching vision for a community-centric downtown "place".

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

“Human and neighborly connections inform opportunities and upward economic mobility, increasing community resilience.”

At the core of human interaction lies social infrastructure, the foundation upon which communities thrive. While Kenmore boasts a wealth of local businesses and natural beauty, these defining features often remain inconspicuous to passersby on SR-522. Social infrastructure is supported by physical public realm and third places with legible wayfinding knit together with local businesses, services, arts and culture, and community-based organizations. Together, this social infrastructure provides long term support for community connections and resilience. Identifying key areas of opportunity and implementing projects to highlight and interconnect these assets will forge a more cohesive community. By forging partnerships with local businesses, Kenmore can catalyze community engagement, spur growth, and foster development. Leveraging social infrastructure presents a cost-effective and efficient means of unlocking Kenmore’s inherent assets.



Wayfinding and Business Support

Many of the existing assets are not visible from SR -522 or the Burke Gilman Trail, the highest volume regional transportation routes. Enhancing wayfinding could help visitors and residents understand the “why” and “where” to explore Kenmore’s offerings. The intersection of 68th and 522 is the most visible location for a gateway to Kenmore, and can be a focus area for wayfinding from points south along 68th, east and west from 522 as well as the Burke Gilman Trail. For example, a significant influx of visitors arrive via the well-traveled Burke Gilman trail. Strategically positioning directional signage, artistic installations, and distinctive identity elements along this trail would enable easy navigation to Downtown or the waterfront. Adding other bespoke identity elements like comfortable benches, sheltered areas for shade or protection from inclement weather would invite leisurely sightseeing walks. Strategically placed lighting could signify warmth and accessibility. Informative “distance marker” signs would show nearby destinations. An innovative Brewery Passport program could entice exploration of Kenmore’s food and drink destinations. By magnetizing and expanding upon the Brew Row district, the city can bolster support for local enterprises associated with the roadhouse identity of historic Kenmore.



Arts Activation and Community Hub

Kenmore could position the city as a thriving arts and culture destination through fostering opportunities for artists, creators, and innovators to enhance Kenmore’s visual identity. Some ideas include:

- Providing gallery or studio space to support struggling or displaced artists from neighboring communities.
- Implementing pop-up events and activating vacant storefronts to showcase new businesses, artworks, and cultural offerings revitalizing underutilized spaces while promoting local entrepreneurship and creativity.
- Establishing an incubator space, ideally located near the library, where aspiring entrepreneurs can cultivate and refine their business ideas, fostering innovation and economic growth.
- Exploring opportunities to co-locate programs such as the Together Center or establish partnership initiatives, facilitating synergistic collaborations enhancing the overall community experience.
- Invest in a full time Arts & Culture coordinator employee.

Amplify, Expand, and Connect

By amplifying and expanding existing assets such as the Hangar and Town Square, Kenmore could highlight distinctive features that set it apart from neighboring municipalities. Kenmore’s unique and established local attractions like St. Edwards Lodge, Bastyr University, Brewery Row and Kenmore Air augment the natural beauty of local parks, beaches, rivers, and trails and could serve as cornerstones of Kenmore’s identity.



In the photo above, the pink hues denote existing assets clustered around the Downtown Square, representing established foundations of Kenmore’s urban landscape.

Areas highlighted in orange and yellow signify areas for potential growth and investment. Visual cues serve as a starting point linking the diverse amenities of Kenmore.

Programming and Placemaking

Regularly scheduled programs and events, such as a “Taste of Kenmore,” a triathlon, winter indoor movie screenings at the Hangar, or a scenic “Walk the Bridge,” could spotlight the diverse amenities and investments that Kenmore has to offer.

The City already hosts a range of events in the Town Square that attract many residents and visitors. Prioritizing maintenance and upkeep are key to building civic trust and pride; initiatives like unique landscaping enhancements and seasonal decorations could highlight Kenmore’s identity.

Actively seeking out opportunities for program partnerships, such as establishing an Herb Seed library or hosting a plant sale in collaboration with Bastyr University, amplifies existing businesses and strengthens civic identity. Partnerships can build on the success of Town Square and should reinforce Kenmore’s unique identity including local businesses, arts and culture, and community organizations. By fostering collaborations, Kenmore can showcase its unique niche opportunities and elements, further enhancing community cohesion and pride.

How to Create Social Infrastructure across various Real Estate Sectors			
Multifamily	Office	Retail	Hospitality
Build green spaces for residents (e.g., communal courtyards, gardens, or natural areas and trail networks).	Build green spaces and recreational areas (e.g., plazas, parks, or green roofs).	Build interstitial and transit spaces (e.g., atriums or arcades).	Build green spaces and recreational areas (e.g., plazas, parks, swimming pools, or sports courts).
Include internal recreational areas for residents (e.g., recreation or exercise areas, child playrooms, or meeting spaces).	Include third place–like amenities for employees that encourage social gathering (e.g., wellness spaces, coffee bars and shared dining areas, or lounge areas).	Build green spaces or recreational areas (plazas, parks).	Emphasize well-designed common or interstitial spaces for guests or local residents (e.g., attractive lobbies or co-working spaces with seating and amenities), or game rooms.
Create pocket neighborhoods.	Reserve leasable space for community support facilities run by local nonprofits or community groups.	Reserve tenant spaces for locally owned commercial establishments and third places, especially those owned or operated by socioeconomically marginalized groups.	Include third spaces (bars, cafés, or restaurants) for guests or residents.
Include community-oriented features in interstitial spaces such as front porches or shared balconies.	Include community support facilities such as child-care spaces for employees.	Include a diverse mix of third places that promote social experiences, such as cafés, restaurants, play spaces, or entertainment facilities.	Incorporate event and meeting space for local arts and culture organizations, especially for socioeconomically marginalized groups.

<https://knowledge.uli.org/en/reports/research-reports/2022/social-spaces-resilient-communities-social-infrastructure-as-a-climate-strategy-for-real-estate>

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Green Landscapes of the Pacific Northwest are cherished regionally, and Kenmore's place between Lake Washington and the Sammamish River is notable for accessing natural beauty. However, the current abundance of concrete and parking lots in the city center makes it challenging to connect with this natural beauty. Infusing more landscape and nature-based elements into Kenmore's urban landscape could showcase Pacific Northwest flora and fauna.

"Reforest" Kenmore by integrating natural features of water, forests, and other geographic elements into the downtown area. Highlighting the natural beauty would leverage the shoreline identity of Kenmore. Prioritizing green spaces, wildlife habitats, and nature-centric designs in new developments, public spaces and rights of way would catalyze green spaces within the City.

Other public investments in infrastructure like leveraging public land, and rights of way to construct pedestrian and bike corridors, expand green spaces, establish parks, and provide public parking facilities would enhance the quality of life. Initiatives such as constructing a walking bridge over SR-522 and integrating a walking loop into a pedestrian network of Kenmore's assets would shape the next phase of Kenmore's identity.

Green Loop

Develop a loop that integrates nature and greenery with Kenmore's natural landscapes, including waterfronts, streams, and parks. Extending beyond the confines of the city center, this loop creates a framework for organizing and showcasing the city's assets. By connecting to Brewery Row, the loop not only enhances the vibrancy of

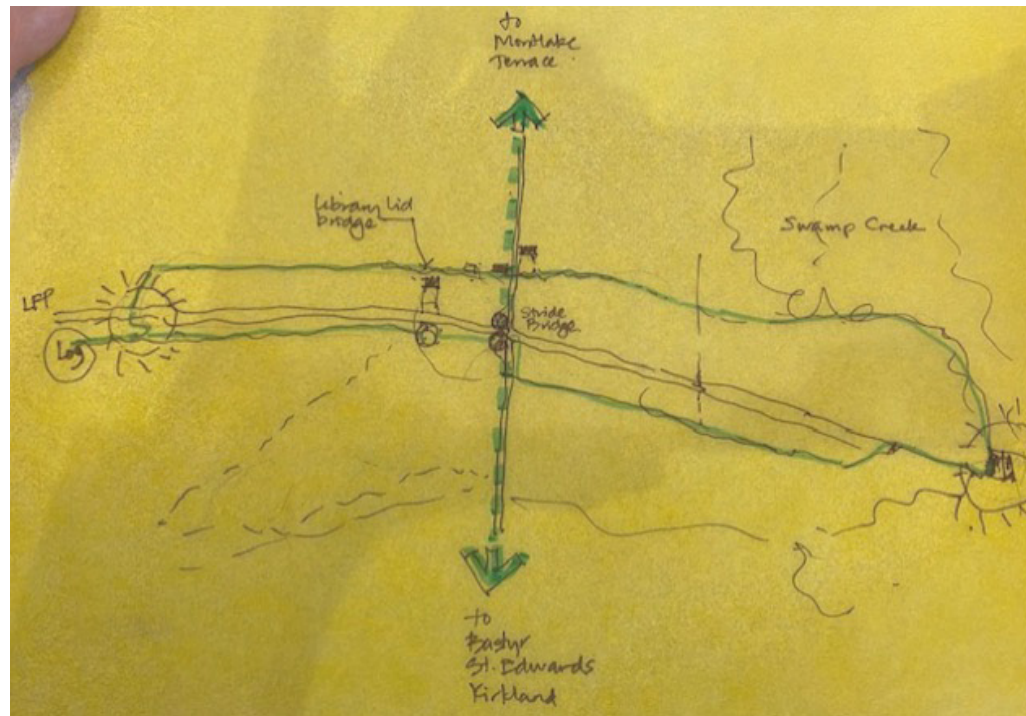


Illustration drawn by the panelists during the TAP to represent the "Green Loop"

the downtown area but also attracts visitors from the nearby Burke Gilman trail. Serving as both a functional pathway and recreational space, the loop encourages walking and outdoor activities, nurturing a sense of community well-being.



Illustration provided by stakeholder Jason Carbaugh

Enhancing SR-522 as a Gateway

SR-522 serves as a vital artery through Kenmore. With a substantial volume of daily commuters, this thoroughfare holds untapped potential to captivate visitors. By enhancing its visual appeal and ambiance, through softening hardscapes and embracing elements of Kenmore's history, such as the roadhouse past, this corridor could evoke nostalgia and pique curiosity. Construction of a pedestrian bridge spanning SR-522 would promote safe pedestrian traffic and guide foot traffic to key destinations.

A vacant lot owned by the city adjacent to SR-522 presents an opportunity for springboarding the bridge. Leveraging the natural grade of the land, this blank canvas could host the foundation for bridge access, further enhanced by a green roof. This approach not only addresses pedestrian safety but also adds an aesthetic dimension and green to the landscape, symbolizing Kenmore's commitment to sustainable development.

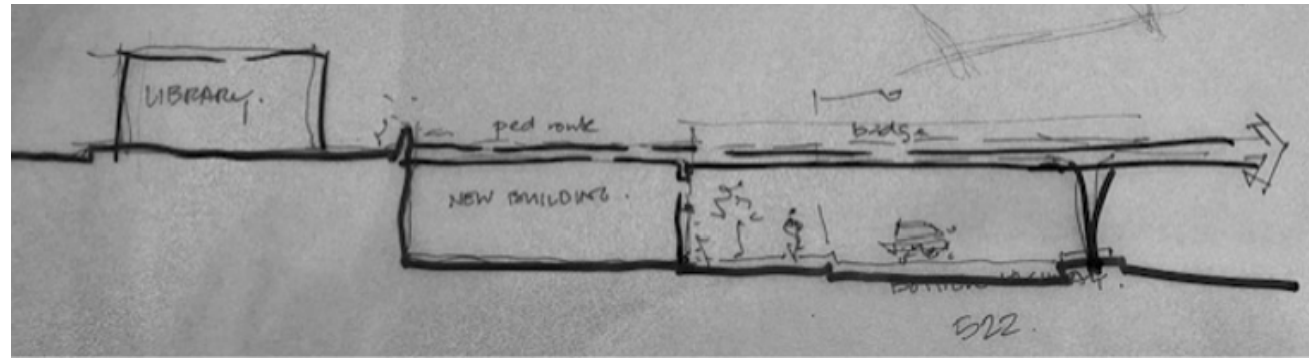


Illustration drawn by the panelists during the TAP

Park & Ride Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

The Sound Transit Park & Ride facility slated for development at the intersection of SR-522 and 68th Avenue NE heralds an opportunity for TOD. By integrating residential, commercial, and recreational spaces around transit hubs, TOD not only introduces new amenities but also catalyzes street activation, a pedestrian friendly setting, and increases vitality.

Collaboration between the City of Kenmore and King County on this initiative would foster innovation and garner vital support for development. Together, they can leverage their respective expertise and resources to unlock the full potential of this TOD, creating a dynamic and sustainable urban environment that benefits residents and visitors alike. The City can support the TOD effort by facilitating permitting and providing active coordination with King County Metro.

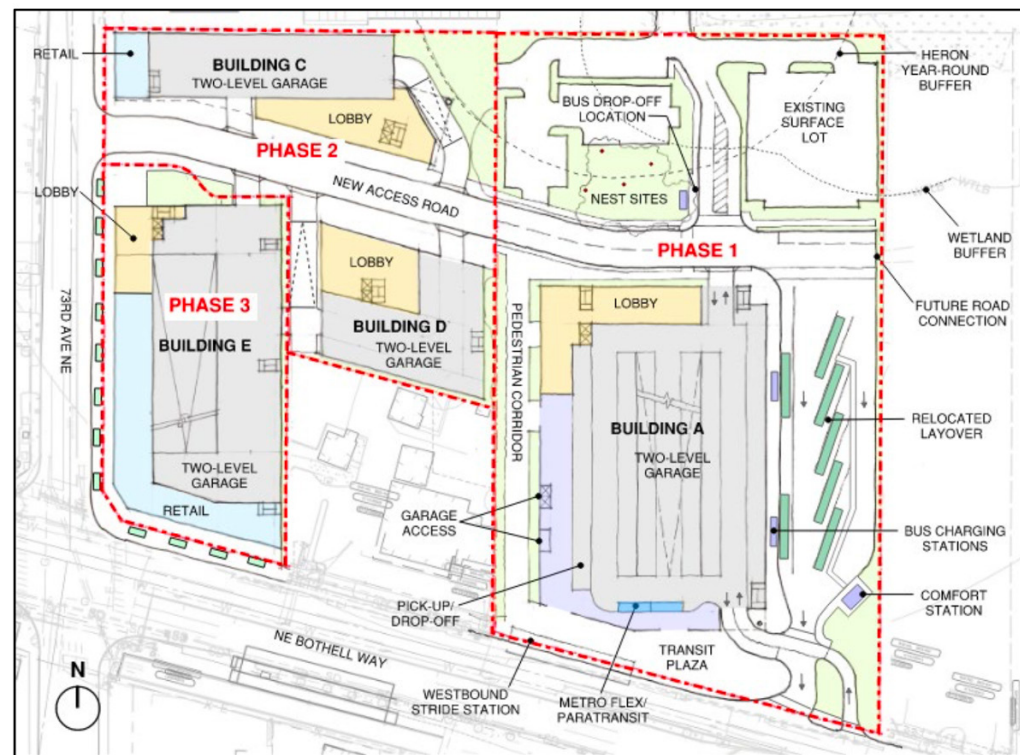
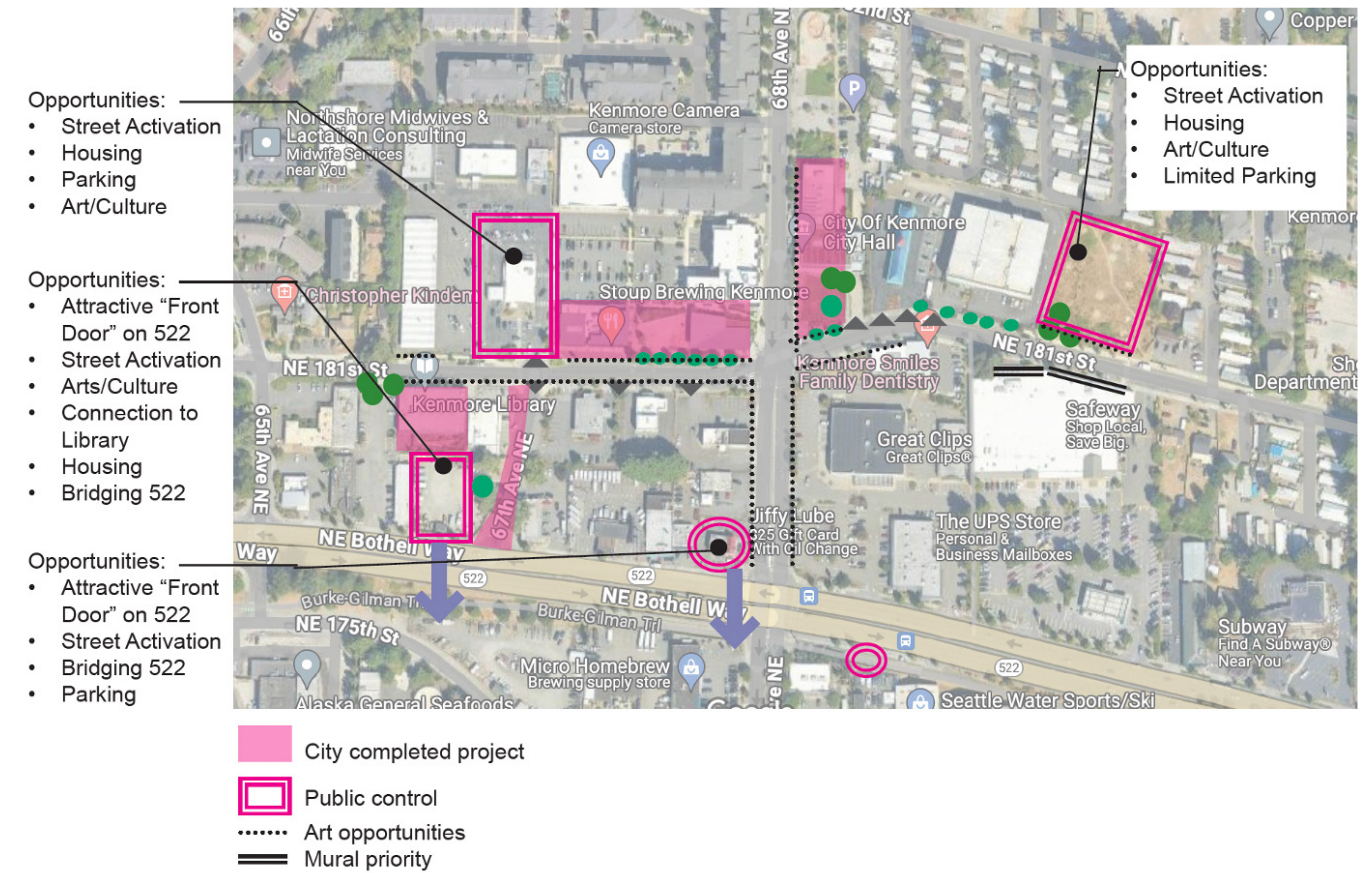


Figure 2-1 - Conceptual Development Plan



Enhancing Downtown Spaces

Downtown Kenmore presents a mosaic of plots and streets ripe for enhancement. Ranging from completed city projects to publicly controlled land, there are many walls and streets that could be potential art opportunities and priority areas for murals and creative expressions.

Strategically developing the land situated along SR-522 offers a gateway opportunity to amplify Kenmore's allure, acting as an attractive "front door". Allocating underutilized parcels for the construction of a pedestrian bridge spanning SR-522 will also provide connectivity from Downtown to the waterfront, creating a pedestrian-friendly conduit through the city.

Challenges inherent in Downtown space management, particularly concerning automobile use and curb cuts—such as those along 181st Street—deserve thoughtful consideration. Balancing vehicular access with stormwater management, natural elements integration, and pedestrian safety is important. Rather than dedicating downtown and downtown's adjacent land to surface parking lots, a parking garage could consolidate vehicles, streamline parking management, and regulate traffic flow.

Finally, art, while occupying minimal physical space, yields a profound impact on urban ambiance and character. Leveraging the topographic drop between the library and the adjacent vacant lot owned by the city offers a prime canvas for artistic expression. This unique terrain presents an opportunity to integrate art seamlessly into the landscape, transforming the space into a vibrant and inviting hub reflective of Kenmore's distinctive identity.

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Economic infrastructure underpins the quality of life, prosperity, growth, and vibrancy of local businesses within a community. Championing the existing, thriving businesses and devising strategies to bolster their sustainability through short- and long-term projects, aligned with the city's Downtown revitalization efforts will create cohesion and success for invested local community and businesses.

Key recommendations for economic infrastructure:

- Infill Development Incentives, Permits, and Regulation Certainty
- Invest in Yourself: Programs and Placemaking Initiatives: Constraint Research
- Strategic Parcel Identification and Support

By embracing these recommendations, Kenmore can fortify its economic foundation, fostering a thriving ecosystem where businesses flourish and community vitality thrives.

Infill Development Incentives, Permits, and Regulation Certainty

Efforts towards establishing clear policy frameworks could establish regulatory certainty creating an investment friendly environment. Kenmore can enhance private development appeal by demonstrating a commitment to collaborative partnership. The examples below offer ways to spur development and encourage redevelopment of underutilized parcels.

Expedited Permitting

Given Kenmore's abundance of small parcels, relaxation of barriers, considering high development cost, could catalyze development.

- Conduct periodic reviews of permit timelines
- Abbreviate or prioritize set review periods for building permits in high-priority areas

Design Review

- Maintain predictability and administrative efficiency of design review
- Establish and adhere to clear timelines for design review

Examination of City Fees, Utility Costs/Capacities, and Stormwater Management

A comprehensive assessment of city fees, utility costs, and stormwater management, beyond zoning code regulations, provides clarity, especially for smaller infill projects.

Incentivization

Utilizing the general fund to remove or reduce fee costs on smaller parcel lots within designated areas, as demonstrated by Auburn, is a proven effective incentive mechanism.

Additional incentives such as the 8-year MFTE (property tax exemption) and Tax Increment Financing support further bolster the attractiveness of development opportunities in Kenmore.

Deferral of Fee Collection

Following Tukwila's lead in deferring fee collection until closer to the Certificate of Occupancy stage, coupled with the promotion of development agreements, would be steps toward demonstrating Kenmore's commitment to facilitating private development.

Promotion of Development Agreements

Beyond land acquisition and control, the city can contribute to public-private partnerships through initiatives such as:

- Expedited permitting and fee waivers or reductions.
- Limited zoning and regulatory variance

Invest in yourself

Promote economic development through enhancing the character of downtown Kenmore. Showcase the city's heritage buildings and unique character, leveraging existing assets and cultural heritage to attract visitors and enhance the overall appeal of the downtown area, ultimately contributing to its vibrancy and economic vitality of Kenmore.

- Businesses have been producing value for the community, empower them further!
- Functions of a business improvement area (BIA)
- Create convenient and close-in parking for drive-through customers (double the resident population) to easily visit and linger in Kenmore's downtown
 - » Dedicate staff for parking coordination
- Business/Parking Improvement Area – Empower Local Businesses
 - » Parking management and consolidation
 - » Direct investment from parking fees back into beautification efforts
 - » Recognize essential customer base is on SR 522 – create strategy to attract them into Kenmore near walkable zone to increase business viability

- Hire Full Time Employee (FTE) Business and Arts Services Coordinator
 - » Technical assistance; ombudsman services for restaurants, businesses
 - » Look at LTAC potential yield to support position activities – events, space programming, coordination/alleviation of congestion
 - » Local businesses and community events to support existing and attract new businesses
- Heritage Buildings – Façade Programs
 - » Embrace older buildings and businesses
 - » Invest in historic buildings that emphasize Kenmore’s “brand” (roadhouse vernacular) – painting, lighting at night
 - » Up light buildings and highlight paths and walkways with attractive lighting
- Avoid costly entanglement on small Parcels when big opportunities are south of 522 for long-term improvement of tax base and vitality—do what the city can do best in tackling King County, WSDOT, and other agency/governmental entities, and resource appropriately

Be a city on the lake, not just by the lake – “The Crown of Lake Washington”

Parking

During the stakeholder interviews and panel assessment, parking was a recurring topic due to its importance in balancing car use with promoting walkability in downtown areas. Although complete reliance on cars isn’t sustainable, transitioning away from car dependency requires managed solutions. Strategies include reducing parking requirements, managing existing parking better, and creating shared parking solutions. Encouraging transit, biking, and walking is key, alongside making the downtown area so compelling that people opt for alternative transport modes. Examples from other cities show that thoughtful integration of parking garages can support vibrant, walkable environments by consolidating parking and freeing up street space and surface parking lots to accommodate pedestrians and businesses. Ultimately, a balanced, transitional approach could help achieve long-term walkability and vibrancy goals. As our region’s transportation network evolves and becomes less car dependent, a parking garage can be redeveloped, but for now having convenient centralized parking for creating a downtown adjacent to well-traveled thoroughfare is key to establishing a “drive-to” destination, rather than a “drive-through” destination.

Request for Development Agreement

The city could collaborate with the private sector maximizing the city’s resources to support large-scale projects. Successful suburban center developments like Thornton Creek in Northgate and Totem Lake in Kirkland have implemented dedicated and shared parking arrangements to enhance urban vitality.

Goal: offer a range of tailored options that align with immediate short-term opportunities and larger-scale longer term initiatives through attracting public/private development. The City could signal to the development marketplace and local property owners and developers their willingness to participate in a development agreement through establishing a framework for partnership, with tailored options.

City could offer:

- Expedited permitting and fee waivers/reductions
- Limited zoning/regulatory variance
- 8-year MFTE (property tax exemption)
- Tax increment financing support (TIF) – provide money for publicly owned infrastructure so it doesn’t have large impact on taxes
- Flexible zoning (that works with diverse market conditions)
- Explore 8- and 12-year MFTE exemption programs
- Dedicated shared parking arrangements for residents and visitors

City could request:

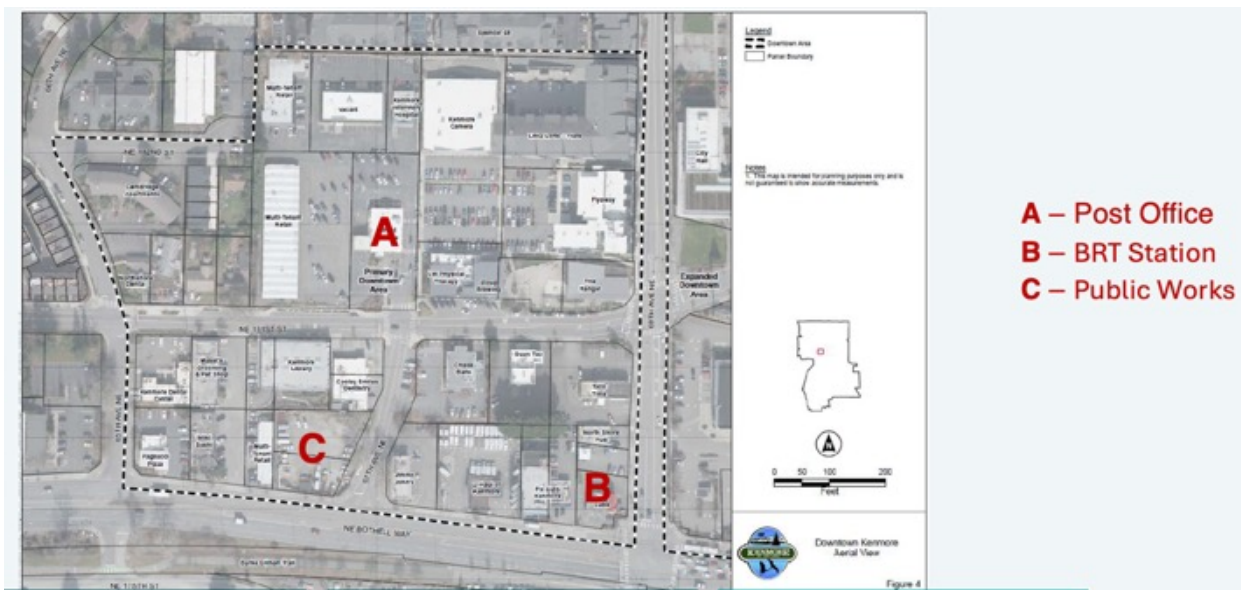
- Additional parking capacity to support downtown businesses.
- Other public realm and/or sustainability assets (i.e., pocket park, Green Factor design, etc.)

Before issuing an RFP for a development agreement, consider several key assumptions and conditions:

- 1. Project Scale and Financing:** Understand the project’s financial requirements, such as the cost of constructing a 300-stall garage, which could need around \$12 million in subsidies.
- 2. Minimum Conditions:** Define minimum project requirements, like site control (ownership or option to purchase) and specific types of development (e.g., residential with ground-floor commercial spaces).
- 3. Incentives and Parameters:** Outline what you can offer, such as impact fee waivers for affordable housing projects that meet city criteria and other entitlements or permits.
- 4. Public Benefits:** Consider additional public benefits, like dedicating part of the development for public use.

5. **Financial Calculations:** Perform basic financial analyses to understand the value of tax increment financing (TIF) and other incentives, ensuring they align with the project’s needs.
6. **Site Size:** Aim for sites of at least an acre to ensure sufficient development potential.
7. **Marketing and Partnerships:** Engage with property owners and developers to generate interest and create competition for the development opportunities.
8. **Pilot Programs:** Consider a limited-time pilot program to expedite permitting and attract qualified developers willing to partner on projects that deliver key public benefits.

Strategic Parcel Identification and Support



The panel identified key sites for potential development and strategies for leveraging them to enhance the city’s economic and infrastructural landscape. The highlighted sites include:

Parcel A (Post Office Site): Identified as a critical development site, with significant potential to drive economic activity and connect different parts of the city.

Parcel B (near the Jiffy Lube building): While not owned by the city, this parcel could serve as a crucial connection point to the south side of 522 or function as a front door for downtown development. With Sound Transit’s ongoing work, there may be opportunities for the city to negotiate short-term or long-term uses of this site, turning it into an economic resource.

Parcel C: Currently utilized by the public works team, this parcel could become another important gateway to downtown, linking parcel A to 97 and facilitating access to the city core. It presents both short-term and long-term developmental potential.

Strategies for Leveraging the Sites:

1. **Parking Management:** The need for better-organized parking is emphasized, especially as density increases and more development occurs. The city can play an active role in managing parking, which could also generate revenue. Effective parking management is crucial during peak times, such as weekends, to mitigate conflicts between residents and businesses.
2. **Public Use Encouragement:** By playing a leadership role in encouraging public use of these spaces, the city can create a framework that supports increased density and development. This includes promoting public-private partnerships to develop the parcels in ways that align with the city’s long-term vision.
3. **Catalyst for Development:** Parcel A, in particular, can act as a catalyst for discussions with private property owners about their future plans. Engaging owners who might consider selling their properties, the city can facilitate development that supports its broader goals. This involves understanding owners’ needs, such as replacing income and managing tax implications, and integrating these considerations into the development strategy.
4. **Public-Private Partnerships:** These partnerships can be highly beneficial, with private developers potentially taking ownership of certain parcels to bring in the necessary resources and expertise. This can lead to developments that are in line with the city’s vision while providing financial and logistical support from the private sector.

Overall, the strategy involves a mix of proactive parking management, leveraging public spaces, engaging in strategic negotiations, and fostering public-private partnerships to drive cohesive and sustainable development in the city. The goal is to create a vibrant, connected, and economically robust downtown area that can attract both residents and visitors.

Project A – Post Office Parking and Development Opportunity

Opportunity for subgrade public parking to:

- Anchor a public parking management strategy
- Mitigate peak parking conflicts
- Generate parking revenue
- Create pad for future PPP development to complete the western edge of the public square



Project B - Sound Transit Stride Bus Rapid Transit Station - Front Door to Downtown

Opportunity to leverage Sound Transit's land investment to:

- Enhance the "front door" to Downtown
- Potential non-motorized crossing to Burke Gilman and existing 68th pedestrian and bike investments

People want to corridor to be a safe place to walk and bike:

- Reinforce safety message
- Leadership in negotiation about how safety happens at this intersection
- Asset opens up a conversation and potentially opens up resources and grants from state



Station locations in Kenmore on SR-522 at 68th Ave NE. Stations are noted in blue. (Sound Transit)

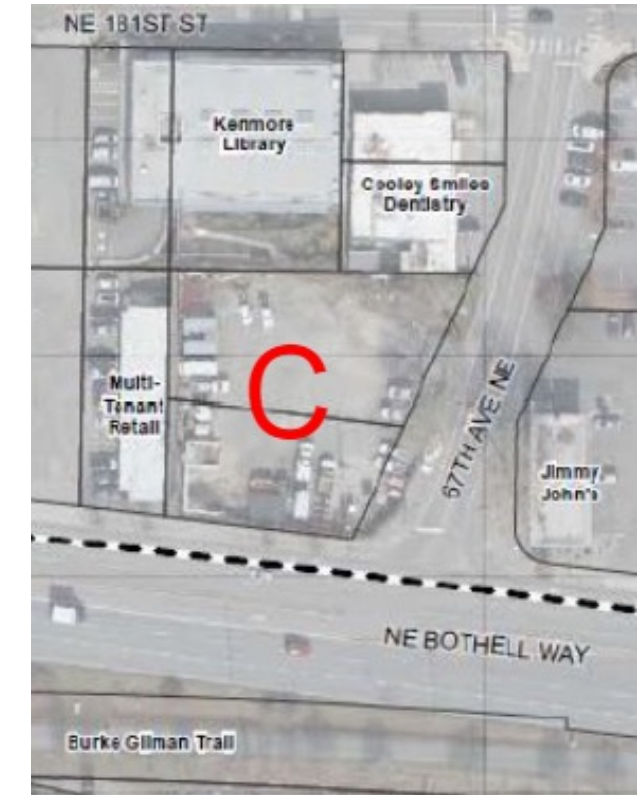
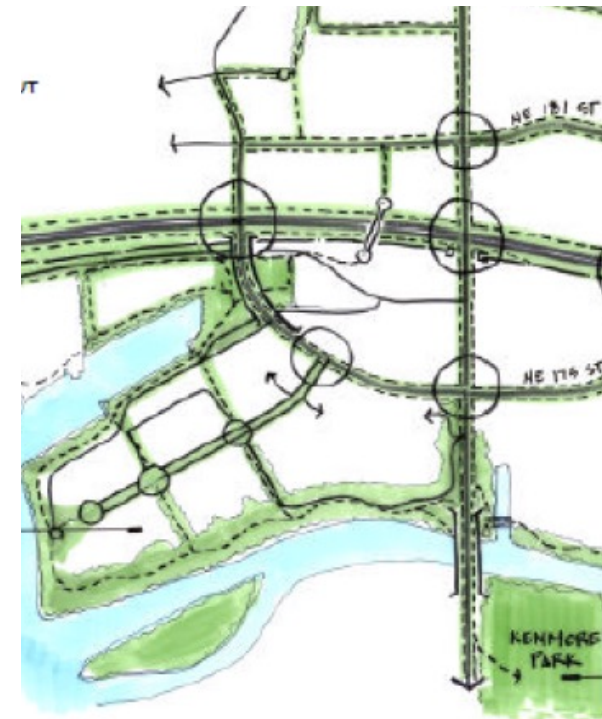
The second site leverages the forthcoming bus rapid transit connection, emphasizing the community's desire for safe walking and biking corridors. Recent city investments in safety are seen as essential. The bus rapid transit stop is an opportunity to enhance safety and negotiate with Sound Transit for resources. This could attract grants from state and federal sources to protect residents from the impacts of heavy traffic. This site can initiate important discussions and potentially secure additional funding.

Project C – Public Works Lot Pedestrian/Bike Gateway

Opportunity to:

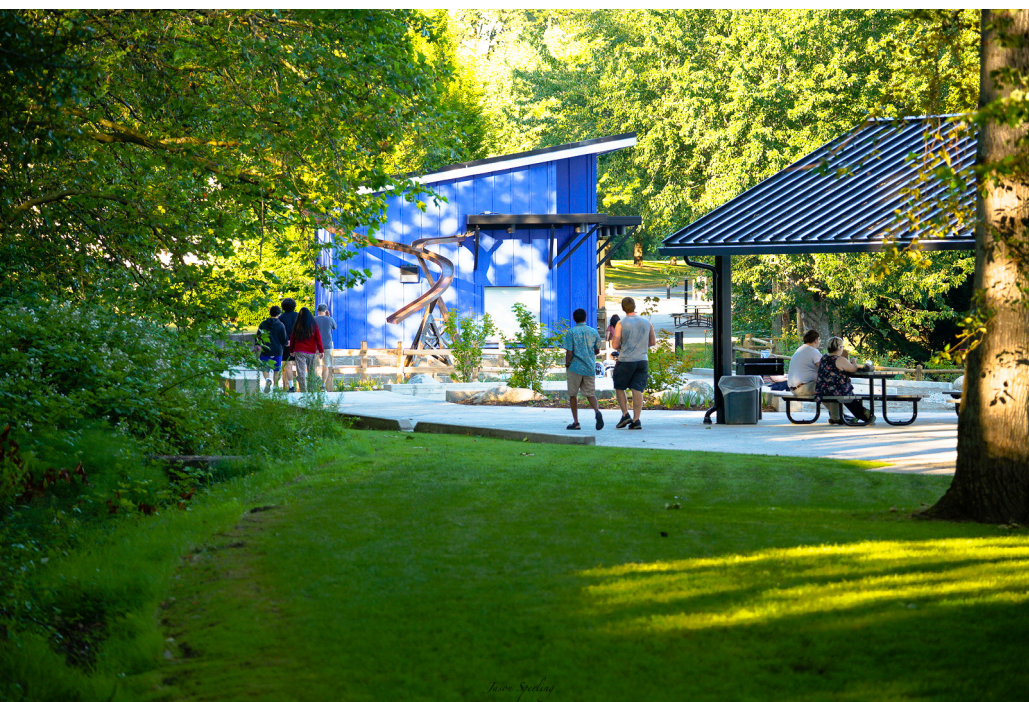
- Connect across SR-522 to provide safe pedestrian and bike connection to Downtown from Burke Gilman Trail
- Connect to the big vision for Lakepointe site
- Short-Term WSDOT funding available (Applications due 5/31/24)

The community is captivated by the waterfront's potential, but there are barriers to development. Parcel C is seen as crucial for connecting investments on both sides of SR-522 and downtown. Linking it to the Burke Gilman Trail will attract customers to nearby businesses. There is a short-term funding opportunity with \$29 million from the state for pedestrian and bike infrastructure, which could finance initial studies for using Parcel C and improving connectivity over SR-522.



Resources

- [ULI/HDC Affordable Housing Toolkit – A guide for Cities, Counties and Advocates in Washington State](#)
- [WSDOT Pedestrian & Bicycle Program](#)
- Smart Growth America: "(Re)Building Downtown: A Guidebook for Revitalization"
 - <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/rebuilding-downtown/>
- National Complete Streets Coalition: "Model Complete Streets Policy Framework"
 - <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/elements-complete-streets-policy/>
- Center for Community Progress: "Creative Placemaking on Vacant Lots."
 - <https://communityprogress.org/publications/creative-placemaking-on-vacant-properties/>



CONCLUSION

Kenmore's fundamentals are based on the balance of price relative to risk and include employment and housing density. Over the past 20 years, Kenmore has overcome initial low density and infrastructural challenges to develop significantly. Its strategic location between major job centers, urban growth, and public-private investments have led to impressive development, including a destination hotel, fine dining, dense housing, and thriving street-level retail. Despite a decrease in employment density, Kenmore has achieved substantial urban density and vibrancy, making it a model of successful urban growth.

Kenmore is not lagging its neighbors in terms of development - Kenmore's efforts have actually surpassed expectations, driving considerable development activity. Kenmore has been proactive in creating a thriving community hub and is motivated to build on this progress. Continued strategic investment, partnerships, and programs can leverage and expand Kenmore's unique identity and sense of place.



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