



City of Kenmore
Planning Commission Meeting
Agenda
Tuesday, February 3, 2026
7:00 PM

ZOOM - LINK: <https://kenmorewa-gov.zoom.us/j/83950857443>

Telephone: Dial US: +1 253 215 8782

Webinar ID: 839 5085 7443

REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION HERE: kenmorewa.gov/accommodation

If you have technical difficulties accessing the meeting virtually, please contact the Deputy City Clerk at mkang@kenmorewa.gov.

Technical Difficulties - If the virtual component of the meeting disconnects, and we cannot resolve technical difficulties to reconnect the virtual component, the in-person meeting will continue at City Hall if there is a quorum of the body to conduct business.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER - 7:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the City of Kenmore is situated upon the ancestral lands of the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Sauk-Suiattle, Duwamish, Stillaguamish, Tulalip, Suquamish, Muckleshoot, and other tribes who are part of the Coast Salish Peoples. We recognize and express our deepest respect for their enduring stewardship and profound relationship with this land, which they have cherished and protected since time immemorial. We honor the First Peoples, acknowledge their vibrant cultures, and commit ourselves to learning from their wisdom in our journey to promote justice, equity, and mutual understanding. We pledge to stand alongside these communities in acknowledging past injustices and working towards a future that respects and celebrates the diverse heritage of this land.

4. FLAG SALUTE

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

We welcome our community members to the Planning Commission meeting. In this forum, the Commission does not engage or dialogue with the public; the primary role is to listen. We will hear from our on-site guests first, followed by our pre-registered virtual guests. All guests must address comments to the Commission. The Clerk will acknowledge your request and call your name when it is your turn. Your time will start when we confirm that we can hear you. Please state your name and city of residence for the record and keep your comments to 3

minutes. We will not split your time with others or reset your time except by express approval of the Chair. You can submit materials to the Clerk in advance. This meeting is being recorded. Thank you for taking the time to express your comments.

- A) **VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT PRE-REGISTRATION PROCESS:** To provide public comments virtually, please fill out the [Virtual Public Comment Request Form](#) in advance of the meeting. The form closes at 12:00 Noon on the day of the meeting. You will be confirmed by the Clerk. If you are having difficulty, please reach out to the Clerk at stippleleen@kenmorewa.gov.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- A) 01.06 Meeting Minutes
1. 01.06 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

7. AGENDA ITEMS

- A) Corner Store and ACUs Discussion
1. Staff Memo
2. Corner Stores and ACUs Power Point
3. Corner Stores and ACUs in Other Washington Cities Table

8. ADJOURNMENT

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE:

- A) Tuesday, February 17, 2026 - CANCELED due to Council Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 7pm

City of Kenmore
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

Planning Commission Members – In Attendance (the meeting was held onsite and virtually using the Zoom online platform)

Tracy Banaszynski, Chair
Dwight Thompson, Vice Chair (virtual)
Kara Macias
Edouard Lassalle
Mike Vanderlinde
David Dorrian
Chris Olson (virtual)

Staff

Todd Hall, Principal Planner
Shannon Tipple-Leen, Planning Commission Clerk
Michelle Kang, Co-Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Banaszynski at 7:00 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

All commissioners present.

MOTION – Commissioner Vanderlinde moved to move up the voting of officers to the third item on the agenda. Commissioner Macias seconded. 7 Yes: 0 No. Motion passed.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

MOTION – Commissioner Vanderlinde nominated Tracy Banaszynski to position of Chair. Commissioner Dorrian seconded. Chair Banaszynski accepted. Yes: 7, No: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

MOTION – Vice Chair Thompson nominated David Dorrian to position of Vice Chair. Commissioner Lassalle seconded. Commissioner Dorrian accepted. Yes: 7 No: 0 Absent: 0. Motion passed.

4. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Land Acknowledgement was read.

5. FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was done.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public comment was given.

7. CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from December 2, 2025, were approved. The consent agenda was accepted with unanimous consent.

8. AGENDA ITEMS

PROS Plan

Todd Hall gave a brief presentation on the final draft of the PROS Plan.

Questions/Comments:

Chair Banaszynski – To clarify you would like a recommendation to send to Council.

Staff response: Yes

Vice Chair Dorrian – Great job on this document.

Chair Banaszynski – Second that. Maps and design are beautiful.

Commissioner Vanderlinde – the Commission owes a great deal to Beckwith Consulting too. Please pass along.

Vice Chair Dorrian – small edit Kenmore’s Future Triangle. Remove "Kenmore future triangle" and have it read "Kenmore will tend to continue...."

MOTION – Commissioner Thompson moved to send the PROS Plan to City Council for their consideration. Commissioner Olson seconded. Yes: 7, No: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

MOTION – Commissioner Thompson moved to add the memorandum from Vice Chair Dorrian to the packet to send to Council. Commissioner Lassalle seconded. Yes: 7, No: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

2026 Docket

Todd Hall presented the Planning Commission Docket for 2026.

Commissioner Vanderlinde - On affordable housing item, thinking about what the end point of that legislative session is and how that may affect our work.

Staff reply: Because it is a short session, we should know fairly quickly which bills are going to survive and what will affect us.

Vice Chair Dorrian - Regarding Rep. Davis drive to convert Bastyr student housing into affordable housing - might that require us to make a zoning change?

Staff reply: More to come on this issue. Comments on current permits to convert some student housing to clinic use.

Commissioner Lassalle - As we come out of PROS Plan, regarding item 4 (Capital Facilities Plan), what type of fine tuning would be required.

Staff reply: Transportation and stormwater budgets are more definitive.

Commissioner Vanderlinde- Regarding Bastyr housing to clinic conversion, should ensure that they are done safely and meet all codes.

Staff reply: City has in-house building staff, as well as work with L&I to ensure compliance and safety.

Vice Chair Dorrian – Regarding Affordable Housing and STEP - if we're working on the housing strategy, and it needs to be consistent with the Housing Element, the drive for Council to continue a STEP committee needs further clarification as to what that committee is going to do. If the Planning Commission is working on affordable housing strategy at the same time, those two things cannot be in conflict. So if we're saying that if the STEP committee is going to be a function of Development Services instead of Community Development and actually reviewing proposals for STEP housing, could see how that might make sense, but would expect that would be consistent with strategies of the Housing Element and not with the intent to implement a separate strategy for those reviews. Not sure how this is being treated with Council, but as I look at this that's a concern that comes up. On the flip side, we need to be aware of Council's concern there as well, which is that they want to make sure the community input is being given on all of these things.

Commissioner Thompson - STEP Committee is not the Planning Commission, and if they are going to suggest amendments to Comp Plan and Element, by law this has to go to Planning Commission. The STEP Committee doesn't have the legal authority to review for Comp Plan. Also, agrees with Vic Chair Dorrian on working together.

Chair Banaszynski - STEP Is over, for now, but may come back for further comments.

Staff reply: Debbie can comment when she returns.

Commissioner Macias – Housing Use Element update is current?

Staff – yes but if we find we need to make some adjustments we can.

Commissioner Macias - Was everything addressed with regards to HB 1220 in the last update?

Staff reply: When we worked with consultants regarding middle housing, we updated what we needed to at that time. If there's additional items that need to be amended in the Housing Element with regards to affordable housing we can do so this year.

Commissioner Macias - If Bastyr changes use to affordable housing, that would require more of a zoning/land use change?

Staff reply: Yes, but we don't know a lot at this point.

Vice Chair Dorrian - There would be value on at least connecting back with Housing Element as we're talking through affordable housing strategy because the time we worked on Housing Element as so quick. Because we've made such big changes with regards to middle housing and inclusionary housing, is there any data on this yet?

Staff reply: Would be good to check in either late this year or early next on results.

Commissioner Vanderlinde - Learning a lot more on how we work with affordable housing, particularly in Seattle. Look at what we did originally and how we might make changes.

Vice Chair Dorrian - Regarding item 14 (commercial to residential conversion) - if we're enabling this would this have an impact on zoning?

Staff reply: It could, but only if it doesn't comply with existing zoning. If a greater impact city-wide, might make this a separate item for future discussion.

Vice Chair Dorrian - Under future consideration, Manufactured Housing and Mobile Home Park regulations. We should get ahead of community engagement if we're going to consider any changes to Mobile Home Park regulations.

Commissioner Vanderlinde - Lakepointe, what's going to happen with this and specifically related to housing?

Staff reply: Leadership is working on this.

Commissioner Macias - Appeals timeline on manufactured homes?

Staff reply: Will have Debbie address when she returns.

Commissioner Macias - Would be nice to have regulations in place.

Chair Banaszynski - Believe the clock starts only after the appeal is settled. Would be protected for the full length of time until the appeal is settled.

Commissioner Thompson - A lot of community interest in downtown, reopen the plan, all the issues. Concerned with how the process may go and then be told that the Commission has to be rushed.

Staff reply: As of now, the docket notes the focus on the scope of the Downtown Plan first before any comprehensive planning takes place with the Commission.

Commissioner Vanderlinde - We have a list of items, could very well come up with other things. Maybe we should think about some prioritization.

Vice Chair Dorrian - Would really like to have more time on Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) vs. Neighborhood Commercial/Corner Stores. Todd said that this schedule could change and could allocate more time to AHS.

Commissioner Lassalle - STEP first part of year, AHS second part of year, whereas tenant protection there is some overlap. If we have STEP recommendations adopted even before the introduction of AHS, want to make sure haven't missed an opportunity of deciding one if we haven't had the opportunity in talking about the other.

Commissioner Macias - Maybe we'll have some to put more in there since it's a short legislative session.

Chair Banaszynski - Appreciates the schedule, if we can have more time for AHS, corner stores should be quicker of a discussion than housing, appreciates TOD carve out is held, do you know if how restructuring of King County and climate office how that might affect our work purchasing mobile home parks, can there be money put in the budget

Discussion on the speaking points for PROS recommendation at Council.

Chair Banaszynski – Presenting the PROS Plan to Council. Should we take some time to discuss what we want to talk about. Do you feel like there are things you would want to share that haven't been shared.

Vice Chair Dorrian – Shared most of our thoughts in the transmittal letter.
Commissioner Vanderlinde – Agree. Can't see us using Council time to reiterate the same thing.

Chair Banaszynski – Seeing a lot of nods.

Commissioner Olsen - This document is very readable and speaks for itself. Happy to talk about trails but the maps show approx. locations.

Commissioner Thompson – Capital Facilities Element we can discuss specific Pros Plan pieces. There is another opportunity to provide input there.

Chair Banaszynski – Hearing unanimously that we would feel comfortable with staff sharing the plan. Seeing lots of nods.

Commissioner Olson – Seeing a change on the map. Will talk to staff.

Chair Banaszynski – We have a plan for the presentation. Talk to Todd if you want to add something.

Chair Banaszynski – Thank you to Commissioner Thompson for your role as Vice Chair.

MOTION – Vice Chair Dorrian moved to cancel the January 20th meeting.
Commissioner Vanderlinde seconded. Yes: 7, No: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

Next Steps:
Planning Commission Meeting February 3, 2026.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 8:38PM.

Planning Commission Clerk

Approved by Planning Commission on: _____

Corner Stores and ACUs in Other Cities in Washington

Across Washington State and nationally, cities are revisiting policies that allow small-scale commercial uses within residential neighborhoods. Cities are generally using corner stores, Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs), and live-work units as implementation tools, with differing regulatory frameworks. The following sample cities allow corner stores, ACUs, or live-work units:

Cities in Washington that allow Corner Stores, ACUs, or Live-work (LW) units													
	Type allowed	Location	Uses allowed:				Size limits	Setbacks	Height	Parking Regs.	Operating Hours	Permitting	Other Regs.
			Mini-market	Cafes	Restaurants	Clinics							
Bothell	Corner stores, LW	Corner of block	X	X			2,500 sq. ft.	Based on zoning district, build-to-corner	3 stories if adjacent to residential	None	6am-10pm M-F; 7am-10pm weekends	Corner stores permitted through Neighborhood Commercial standards; Home Occupation licenses	
Anacortes	Neighborhood grocery stores, LW	Most residential zones	X	X	X		1,200 sq. ft. retail sales floor area; 3,200 sq. ft. gross floor area	Based on zoning district	Based on zoning district	LW: multifamily parking + 1 space per nonresidential use for small building (500-1,000 sq. ft.), larger buildings have the same parking	Follows noise ordinance	Requires CUP	Grocery stores are not allowed within 1/4 mile of each other
Shoreline	Neighborhood shops, LW allowed in some zones	Most city streets (except dead-ends and cul-de-sacs)	X	X	X		1,200 sq. ft., can be larger in commercial zonings	Based on zoning district	Based on zoning district	No vehicle parking required; increased bike parking	Depends on use, follows noise ordinance	Based on land use and zoning	

*CUP is Conditional Use Permit

CITY OF KENMORE

Planning Commission Meeting

Corner Stores and Accessory Commercial Units

February 3, 2026



Definitions

- **Corner stores:** small, neighborhood-serving retail shops, selling food, beverages, and household items, and can offer limited prepared food or café-style seating
- **Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs):** small commercial uses that are accessory to a primary residential use on the same lot

New York



France

England



Corner Stores and ACUs History

- U.S. cities mixed residential and small-scale commercial uses before zoning
- After World War II, codes enforced the separation of land uses
- Corner stores were prohibited, demolished, or became legal nonconforming
- Post-COVID return to walkability and small-scale commercial



Durham, NC early 1900s



Capitol Hill in Seattle, 2022

History in Kenmore

- 2023: Middle Housing report recommended corner stores to improve public health
- 2023-24: Love Where You Live Project highlighted community priorities for community spaces and economic development
- 2025: Corner stores were recommended by the STEP Committee to City Council



Henry's Hamburgers in the 1920s and '30s along Bothell Way

Highlights the need for more **grocery stores, supportive services, restaurants, and cafes** throughout the city

Washington State House Bill (HB) 1175

- Bill was approved by the House and is now under Senate consideration
- Cities would have to allow neighborhood stores and cafes in residential zones

Regulations:

- 500 sq. ft. minimum size
- Can operate at least 12 consecutive hours
- Cannot sell nicotine products in residential zones
- Cities may regulate maximum size, parking requirements, and operating hours



Seven Market and Café in Seattle

Benefits of Corner Stores and ACUs

- Walkability and complete neighborhoods
- Small business support
- Neighborhood vitality and social connection
- Incremental and context-sensitive growth



Peru



Japan

Differences between Corner Stores and ACUs

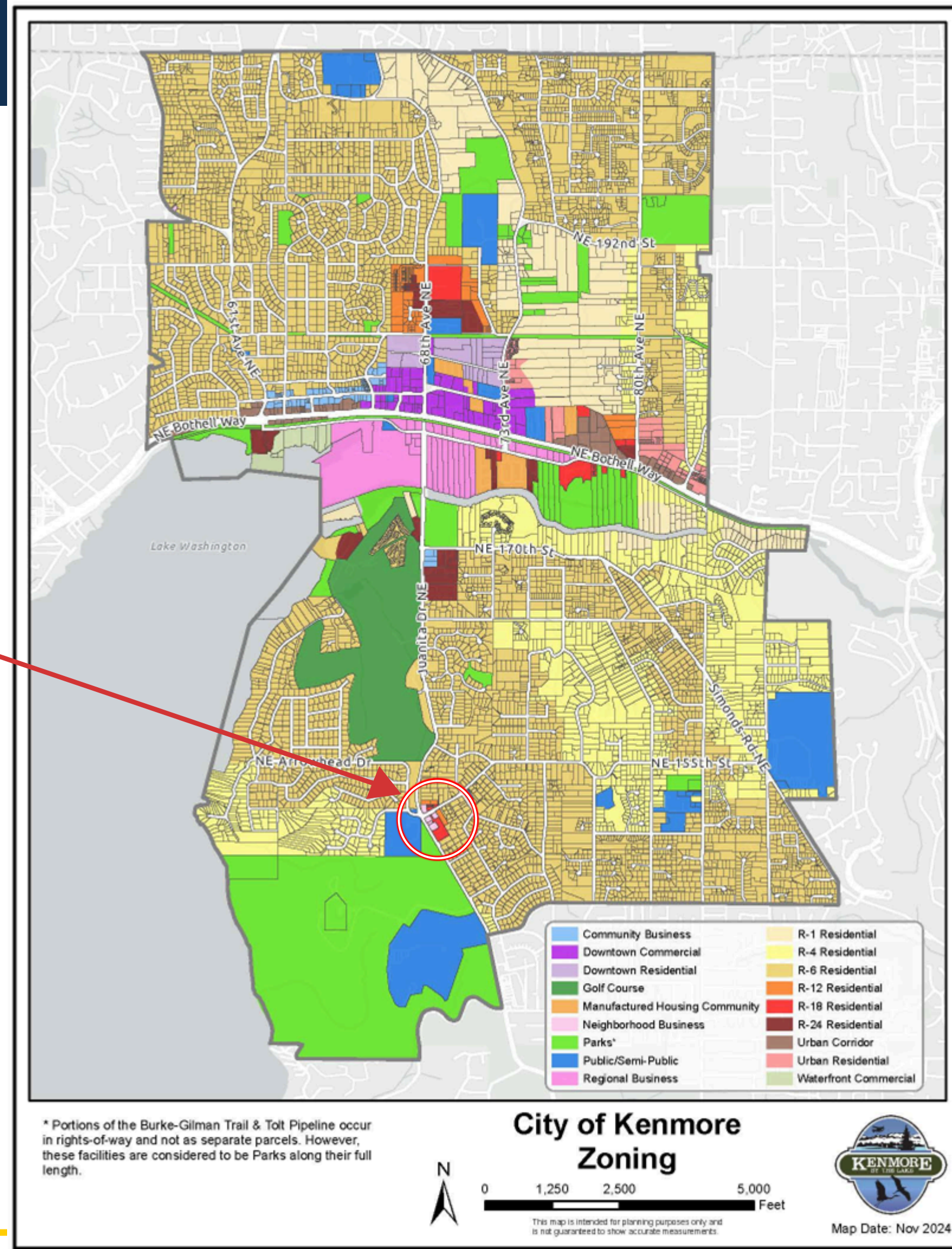
	Corner Stores	ACUs
Relationship to housing	Independent commercial use	Accessory to a primary residence
Typical scale	Larger (1,500-3,000 sq. ft.)	Smaller, often similar to ADU scale
Location	Often corner lots or key neighborhood streets	On residential lots, potentially anywhere allowed
Visibility	Clearly commercial, public facing	May appear residential with some commercial presence
Operator	May or may not live on-site	Typically neighborhood residents
Zoning approach	Often treated as neighborhood commercial use	Treated as accessory use within residential zoning

Kenmore Today

- Commercial uses are mostly in Kenmore's downtown area and along SR-522
- A few Neighborhood Business parcels are on the corner of Juanita Drive NE and NE 153rd Place

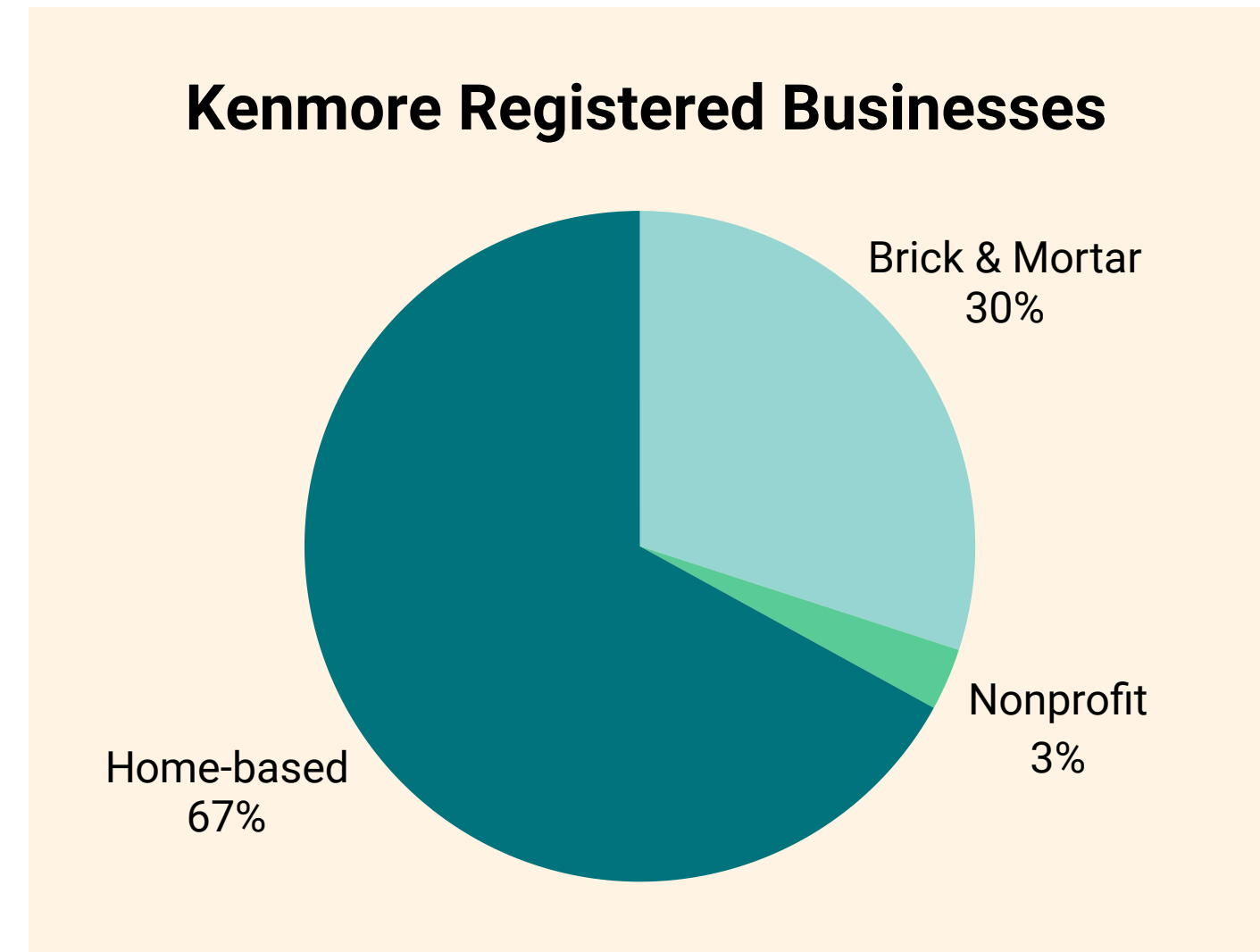


Previously the Guest House
(currently Patty's Eggnest)



Kenmore Businesses

- 2,551 registered businesses in Kenmore (2025)
- The majority (1,709) are home-based businesses
- Home Occupation and Home Industry permits support accessory commercial use



Kenmore does not have enough commercial spaces to support every existing businesses so **mixed-use is needed**

Corner Stores and ACUs in Other Washington Cities

- **Flexible** approach: Bothell and Seattle allow neighborhood retail with standards on size, hours, noise, and location (e.g., corner lots, ground-floor only).
- **Expansive** approach: Shoreline allows neighborhood shops on most city streets; Anacortes allows neighborhood stores in most residential zones
- Targeted or **historic-based approach**: Spokane and Tacoma focus on reusing historic or pre-existing nonresidential buildings
- **Zoning-based** approach: Everett, Burien, Lacey, and Bainbridge Island concentrate neighborhood-oriented businesses in Neighborhood Business zones



The Little Store, Shoreline



Irwin's Bakery and Cafe, Seattle

Discussion Questions

1. What **types of land uses** should be allowed in corner stores and ACUs?



Corner store rendering, City of Seattle

2. Where should corner stores and ACUs be **located**?
- a. Along bicycle boulevards or greenways
 - b. Certain neighborhood nodes or village centers
 - c. Allowed broadly throughout the city

Discussion Questions

3. What would be the **maximum size** allowed for ACUs or corner stores?
4. Should corner stores and ACUs be **automatically approved** if they meet development requirements or go through a **conditional use permit**?
5. What should the **operating hours** be for corner stores and ACUs?



Zulu's Board Game Café in Bothell

Discussion Questions

6. What should the **setbacks** be for corner stores and ACUs?

7. What should the **parking requirements** be for corner stores and ACUs?

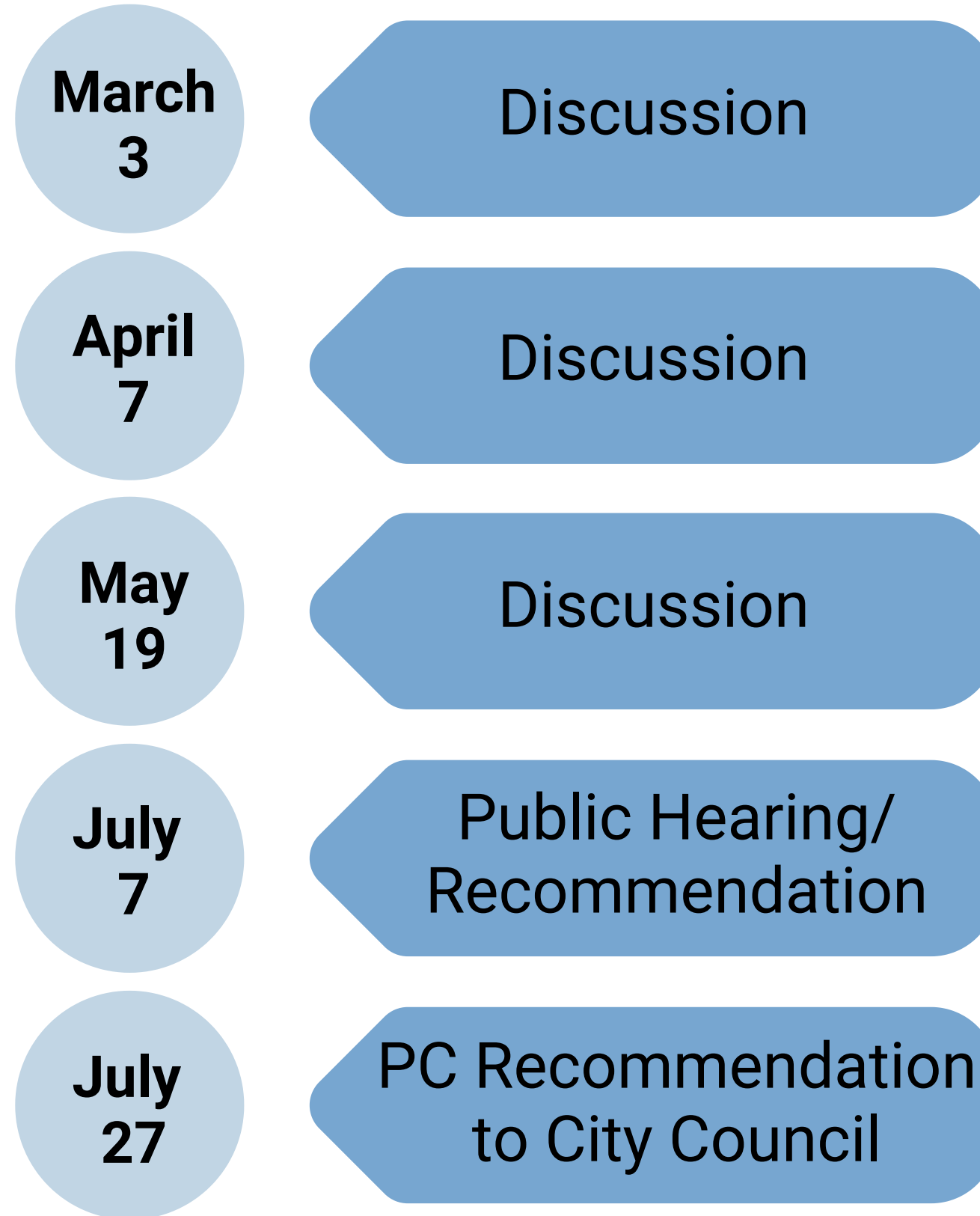
8. What should the **maximum height** be for corner stores and ACUs?

9. Other standards to consider (noise ordinance, topography, smell, and others)?



Rendering of a corner store, Gibbs Planning Group

Next Steps



For comments and questions:

Brittany Chue
Senior Planner, Community Development Department
bchue@kenmorewa.gov
425-984-6157





Memorandum

Date: January 27, 2026
To: Planning Commission
From: Brittany Chue, Senior Planner
Regarding: February 3, 2026, Meeting Agenda Items

At your Tuesday, February 3, 2026, meeting, Staff will present an introduction to Corner Stores and Accessory Commercial units (ACUs) and request discussion on the locations and permitted land uses for corner stores and ACUs, as well as regulations: maximum size, parking requirements, permitting requirements, operating hours, setbacks, height, and other standards.

The Planning Commission will continue discussions on Corner Stores and Accessory Commercial units on March 3rd, April 7th, and May 19th. There will be a public hearing and recommendation on July 7, 2026. Planning Commission will present their recommendations at the July 27, 2026, City Council meeting.

Attachments

Corner Stores and ACUs

1. Corner Stores and ACUs Staff Memo
2. Corner Stores and ACUs in Other Cities in Washington Table
3. Corner Stores and ACUs PowerPoint

Overview of Corner Stores and ACUs

Interest in reintroducing small-scale commercial uses into residential neighborhoods has reemerged in Kenmore and peer cities as communities seek more walkable, complete neighborhoods and lower barriers for small businesses. Corner stores and Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs) are two related but distinct approaches to allowing neighborhood-serving commercial activity within residential areas. Historically common before modern zoning, these concepts are being reconsidered through comprehensive plan updates, zoning reforms, and state legislation.

Discussions for corner stores in Kenmore reemerged last year during STEP Committee meetings. As City Council is considering implementing Permanent Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing throughout the City this year, STEP Committee members recommended City Council to adopt corner stores in areas that allow for Permanent Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing to support these developments through food services, clinics, and similar land uses.

In the Middle Housing report presented to City Council on 9/25/23 ([see agenda here](#)), the following recommendations support corner stores to improve public health:

1. Center health as a factor of equitable sustainability.
2. Apply neighborhood level public health practices, including spreading out community resources across neighborhoods. This includes incorporating neighborhood level services in addition to community level services, such as adding corner stores in addition to grocery stores. This spreads the number of people accessing or gathering at primary resource locations and supports health considerations during events such as COVID-19.

Additionally, in the Love Where You Live Project in 2023, community members provided feedback on prioritizing the needs of Kenmore. The top two themes identified were 1) community spaces and 2) economic development. In 2024, a second round of community engagement identified the top priorities for economic development downtown as 1) shopping, 2) restaurant/grocery, and 3) mixed-use retail. Kenmore residents want increased walkability and access to grocery stores, local restaurants, and shops.

Both corner stores and ACUs offer potential tools for advancing Kenmore's goals related to walkability, public health, and neighborhood-serving amenities, while raising important considerations around scale, location, and compatibility with residential areas. This memo provides an overview of these uses, outlines key policy considerations, and identifies options for how the City may regulate and implement corner stores and ACUs in a manner consistent with adopted plans and community priorities.

Washington State House Bill (HB) 1175

In the current 2025-2026 legislative session, HB 1175 is a bipartisan bill that would require cities to allow neighborhood stores and cafés in residential zones. As of January, the bill was approved by the House and is currently under Senate consideration.

Key Provisions:

- Minimum 500 sq. ft. size
- Cities may regulate maximum size, parking requirements, and operating hours
- Businesses must be allowed to operate at least 12 consecutive hours
- Prohibitions on selling nicotine products in residential zones

Definitions

Corner Stores

Corner stores are small, neighborhood-serving retail establishments, typically selling daily convenience goods, such as food, beverages, and household items, and sometimes offering limited prepared food or café-style seating. These shops are generally public-facing retail uses, often located on corner lots or primary neighborhood streets, stand-alone buildings or ground-floor spaces in mixed-use buildings, and typically between 1,500-3,000 square feet in size. Corner stores are intended to serve nearby residents within walking or biking distance and function as informal neighborhood gathering places.

Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs)

Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs) are small-scale commercial uses that are accessory to a primary residential use on the same lot, similar in concept to accessory dwelling units (ADUs). ACUs may be located within, attached to, or detached from a residence, converted from existing residential space (including ADUs), or operated by or closely tied to neighborhood residents. ACUs are designed to fill the gap between home occupations and traditional commercial storefronts, allowing small businesses to operate in a limited, neighborhood-compatible way.

Key Differences Between Corner Stores and ACUs

	Corner Stores	ACUs
Relationship to housing	Independent commercial use	Accessory to a primary residence
Typical scale	Larger (1,500-3,000 sq. ft.)	Smaller, often similar to ADU scale
Location	Often corner lots or key neighborhood streets	On residential lots, potentially anywhere allowed
Visibility	Clearly commercial, public facing	May appear residential with some commercial presence
Operator	May or may not live on-site	Typically neighborhood residents
Zoning approach	Often treated as neighborhood commercial use	Treated as accessory use within residential zoning

History of Corner Stores and ACUs

Pre-Zoning Era

Before the widespread adoption of zoning regulations, U.S. cities and towns traditionally mixed residential and small-scale commercial uses. Neighborhoods would often include corner stores, cafés, and street-facing retail integrated into residential blocks, providing daily needs within a short walk.

Post–World War II Zoning

Following World War II, zoning codes increasingly enforced strict separation of land uses, particularly in single-family residential areas. Corner stores and small neighborhood retail were either prohibited, demolished, or rendered legally nonconforming. Commercial activity was redirected to designated commercial corridors and centers, reinforcing automobile dependence.

Kenmore Historically

Historically, Kenmore’s restaurants and commercial uses have been located along Bothell Way. Some examples from the 1930s are the Cat’s Whiskers Café and Henry’s Hamburgers. Henry’s Hamburgers originally began as a hot dog stand and then became a tavern and café, moving further west on Bothell Way.



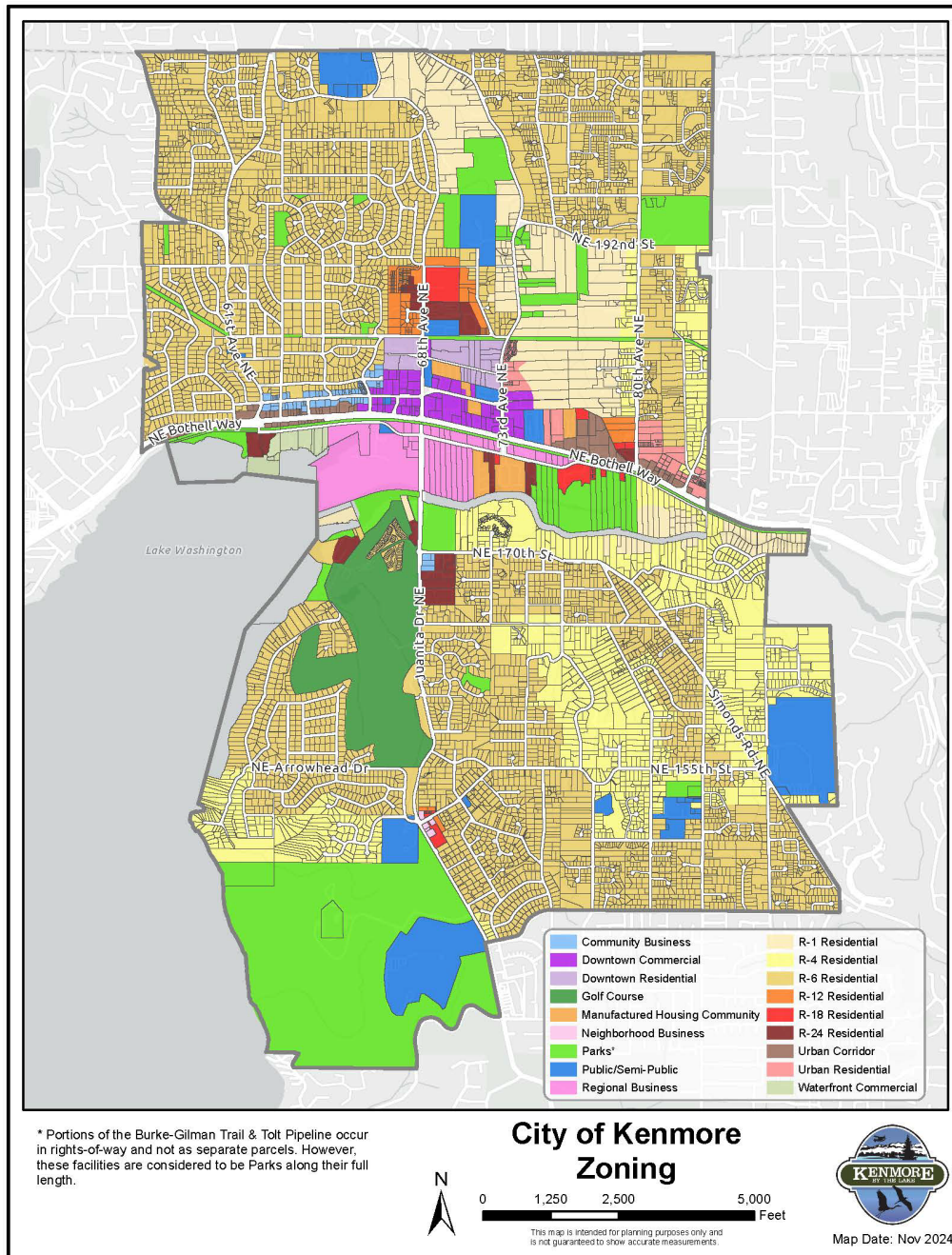
The Cat's Whiskers Café in the 1930s at 61st Avenue NE and Bothell Way



Henry's Hamburgers in the 1920s and '30s along Bothell Way

Kenmore Today

The zoning map below displays where commercial uses in Neighborhood Business and Commercial Business are permitted in Kenmore – mostly in Kenmore’s downtown area and along SR-522. Most of Kenmore’s commercial uses are located along Bothell Way, with a few exceptions. There are a few Neighborhood Business lots on the corner of Juanita Drive NE and NE 153rd Place that currently house a couple of restaurants (Patty’s Eggnest and Butcher Shop Cafe), a coffee shop (Grounds Coffee Co), and a convenience store (Ricky’s Corner Food Mart).



18120 68th Ave NE, Kenmore, WA 98028



This restaurant was previously the Guest House in 2024 and is now Patty's Eggnest



Butcher Shop Café (left), Grounds Coffee Co (middle), and Ricky's Corner Food Mart (right)

Recent Reconsideration

In recent years, planners and policymakers have revisited these earlier patterns, partially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The renewed emphasis on walkability, complete neighborhoods, climate goals, and small business support has led to zoning reforms allowing limited commercial uses in residential areas, relegalization of historic neighborhood commercial buildings, and the implementation of ACUs as a flexible, incremental form of mixed use. Both corner stores and ACUs are now viewed as tools to restore neighborhood-scale access to goods and services without altering neighborhood character since they are smaller in size.

Relationship to Kenmore's Comprehensive Plan

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan supports the consideration and adoption of regulations for corner stores and ACUs:

- Policy LU-1.2.6: Consider small-scale, neighborhood commercial uses within walking or bicycling distance of homes to increase residents' opportunities to meet their daily needs without having to drive.
- Policy LU-1.4.1: Through land use regulations and economic development, encourage locally based food production, distribution, and choice.
- Policy LU-1.5.4: Consider opportunities for small-scale neighborhood retail, restaurants, and other service activities in residential areas to increase walkability and enliven residential neighborhoods.
- Policy LU-1.6.1: Provide adequate land for commercial development that enhances community goals, augments the tax base, and does not adversely impact the natural environment.
- Policy LU-1.6.2: Support the large number of home-based businesses in Kenmore and recognize their importance as a way to keep jobs closer to home.

The land use policies above encourage the development of corner stores and ACUs to increase walkability, help residents meet their daily needs, increase the tax base, and reduce commute times. Implementing corner stores and ACUs in Kenmore can enhance the character of neighborhoods, promote healthier lifestyles, and improve the quality of residents' lives.

Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan supports the consideration and adoption of regulations for corner stores and ACUs:

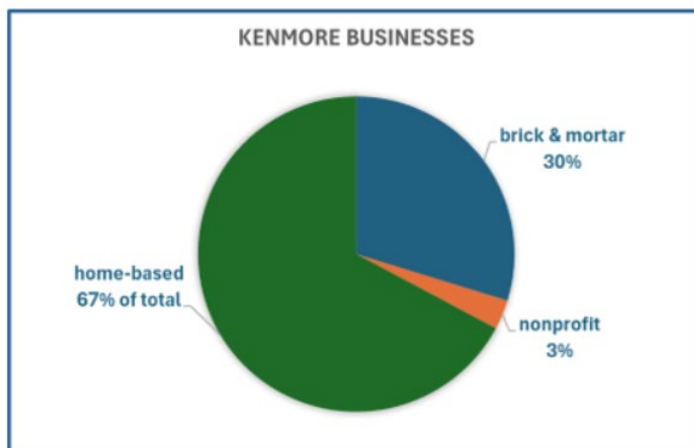
- Policy ED-3.3: Encourage mixed-use areas where small-scale commercial development can occur.

- Policy ED-3.4: Encourage the development of shared office/co-working spaces in Kenmore.

These uses support broader economic development goals by encouraging local entrepreneurship, retaining and expanding small businesses, and supporting neighborhood-scale employment opportunities. Approximately **67% of Kenmore’s businesses are home-based**, so “there may be an upcoming need and demand for smaller-scale office development as these businesses mature. **Buildings that accommodate live-work or coworking spaces may be more suitable for Kenmore’s business environment rather than the traditional Class A or B office space that is commanded in large job centers.** However, because of the lack of available coworking space in Kenmore, businesses are forced to look outside the city,” (Economic Development Element in Kenmore’s Comprehensive Plan).

Registered Businesses Report 2024-2025

	2025 March	2024 March
TOTAL REGISTERED BUSINESSES	2,551	1,485
Kenmore Business	1,341	1,240
Non-Resident Businesses	1,210	245



Relationship to County, State, and VISION 2050 Goals

Countywide Planning Policies

- Business Development: Strengthen, expand, and diversify the economy through creation, retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses.
- Support of the regional food economy: Support improving access to affordable and culturally relevant food options within the local community.

Growth Management Act Economic Development Goals

- Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans
- Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses

VISION 2050 Goals

- Develop a range of employment opportunities to create a closer balance between jobs and housing, reducing commute times, traffic congestion, air emissions and other vehicle related emissions, and improving physical and mental health and community strength.
- Promote environmental and socially responsible business practices, especially those addressing climate change, resilience, and improved health outcomes.

County, state, and regional goals and policies support the implementation of corner stores and ACUs to encourage economic development by expanding opportunities for existing and new businesses, creating opportunities for jobs, reducing commute times and traffic congestion, reducing pollution impacts, and improving physical and mental health, as well as neighborhood character and community coherence.

How Neighborhood Commercial Functions in the Kenmore Code

Kenmore does not currently have corner stores or ACUs in its code. However, Kenmore allows smaller-scale commercial buildings in some residential and mixed-use zones, such as Neighborhood Business and Commercial Business. Additionally, Kenmore allows Home Occupation and Home Industry permits, which can support some accessory commercial uses.

Similar to	Zoning or Permit Type	Uses Permitted	Restrictions
"Corner Stores"	Neighborhood Business (NB) and Community Business (CB)	Artist studios	
		Indoor arts, entertainment	→ Requires a conditional use permit (CUP)
		Retail sales	→ Limited to 5,000 sq. ft. in NB and CB → Allowed only as a mixed-use in CB
		Personal service	→ Limited to 5,000 sq. ft. in NB and CB → Allowed only as a mixed-use in CB
		Health care & social assistance	→ Requires CUP in CB
		Educational service	→ Limited to 5,000 sq. ft. in NB and CB → Requires CUP in CB
		Eating and drinking place	→ Limited to 5,000 sq. ft. in NB and CB → Allowed only as a mixed-use in CB → Drinking places are prohibited in NB
		Office	
		Business service, standard	
		Day care	
		Family child-care home (only CB)	
		Mobile food service (only NB)	
		"ACUs" Or "Live-work"	Home Occupation
Only indoors activities			
No more than 1 nonresident employed			
Sales are limited by mail or phone (e.g., Etsy)			
Specialized instruction schools are limited to 12 students per 1-hour session			
Home Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited-scale sales, service, or fabrication activity All zones allowed except R-12, R-18, R-24, UR, CB Juanita, and NB (CUP required in R-1, R-4, and R-6) 		Limited to 50% of the floor area of unit
			No more than 4 residents can be employed
			Additional parking requirements floor area
			Sales are limited to items produced on site
			Landscaping requirements
Requires a CUP			

Corner Stores Images and Examples



The Little Store in Shoreline (recently closed in 2025 to be replaced by a mixed-use development)



Rendering of a corner store, showing how it relates to housing on a neighborhood block. Source: Gibbs Planning Group

Rendering of a corner store, Gibbs Planning Group



Neighborhood cafes like Wallingford's Irwin's Bakery and Coffee House are mostly banned in residential neighborhoods across the state, with land use regulations only allowing residential uses. (Ryan Packer)

Irwin's Bakery and Café in Seattle



Zulu's Board Game Café in Bothell



Corner store rendering, City of Seattle

Benefits of Corner Stores and ACUs

- Walkability and Complete Neighborhoods: both concepts support walkable access to daily needs, reducing reliance on driving and helping advance complete or “10-minute” neighborhood goals.
- Small Business Support: Corner stores and ACUs lower barriers to entry for entrepreneurs by reducing space needs, startup costs, and reliance on large commercial leases. ACUs support early-stage and homegrown businesses transitioning beyond home occupations.
- Neighborhood Vitality and Social Connection: Historically, corner stores served as informal gathering places. Reintroducing small-scale commercial uses can strengthen neighborhood identity, provide social interaction, and increase eyes on the street.
- Incremental and Context-Sensitive Growth: ACUs and corner stores offer gentle infill strategies that allow communities to incrementally introduce mixed-use activity without large-scale redevelopment or major changes to neighborhood form.

Discussion Questions

1. What types of land uses should be allowed in corner stores (e.g., cafes, bars, mini-markets)?
2. Where should corner stores and ACUs be located?
 - a. Along bicycle boulevards or greenways
 - b. Certain neighborhood nodes or village centers
 - c. Allowed broadly throughout the city
3. What would be the maximum size in sq. ft. be for ACUs or corner stores?
4. Should corner stores and ACUs be automatically approved if they meet development requirements or go through a conditional use permit?
5. What should the operating hours be for corner stores and ACUs?
6. What should the setbacks be for corner stores and ACUs?
7. What should the parking requirements be for corner stores and ACUs?
8. What should the maximum height be for corner stores and ACUs?
9. Other standards to consider (noise ordinance, topography, smell, and others)?

Conclusion

As Kenmore evaluates potential comprehensive plan updates and zoning amendments, corner stores and ACUs provide flexible tools to advance land use, transportation, economic development, and sustainability goals. Key policy considerations include appropriate locations, size limits, operating standards, parking requirements, and alignment with community character.

Next Steps

- **Feb. 3rd**: Introduction – overview of corner stores and ACUs
Tentative Future Dates:
- **March 3rd**: Discussion – regulations for corner stores and ACUs
- **April 7th**: Discussion – draft code
- **May 19th**: Discussion – any other changes
- **July 7th**: Public Hearing/Recommendation
- **July 27th**: PC Recommendation for City Council

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