

City of Kenmore
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

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

Tracy Banaszynski, Chair

David Dorrian, Vice Chair

Kara Macias

Edouard Lassalle

Mike Vanderlinde

Dwight Thompson

Excused

Chris Olson

Staff

Debbie Bent, Community Development Director

Brittany Chue, Senior Planner

Shannon Tipple-Leen, Planning Commission Clerk

Scott Passey, Co-Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Olson was excused

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Land Acknowledgement was read.

4. FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was done.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comment was given.

6. CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from April 21, 2026, were amended to excuse Commissioner Thompson from the meeting. The consent agenda was accepted with unanimous consent.

7. AGENDA ITEMS

Brittany Chue gave a presentation on the survey and outreach efforts for Neighborhood Retail and asked additional questions of the Commissioners.

Survey Results Discussion:

Survey Methodology and Mapping

- Commissioners discussed how survey responses informed the creation of proposed commercial node maps.
- Staff clarified that maps were developed based on initial survey feedback identifying preferences for either allowing uses throughout residential zones or concentrating them in higher-density areas.
- The mapping exercise was also intended to help refine the types of neighborhood-serving uses residents would like to see in different areas.

Clarification of Categories and Definitions

- Commissioners suggested separating eating establishments and drinking establishments into distinct survey categories to better capture public preferences.
- Discussion highlighted the need to clearly define “high density,” noting that the term should not automatically imply a downtown-style development pattern.
- Commissioners also requested clearer terminology around specialty retail uses, including whether art studios, maker spaces, and similar creative uses are included.
- Additional clarification was requested regarding how alcohol and tobacco sales would be categorized and communicated in survey materials.

Node Location Preferences and Infrastructure

- Commissioners discussed allowing respondents to express preferences for different types of commercial nodes and their proximity to existing infrastructure and services.
- There was interest in better understanding how location context and surrounding infrastructure influence support for neighborhood commercial uses.

Evaluating Community Concerns

- Commissioners discussed how concerns expressed through survey responses should be evaluated and weighted.
- Questions were raised about whether all concerns should be treated equally or whether recurring issues and themes should receive greater emphasis in the analysis.

Recommendations:

Retail Uses and Commercial Nodes

- Several commissioners expressed concern about limiting certain retail uses only to designated commercial nodes, noting that market demand should play a larger role in determining viable business locations.
- Questions were raised about the appropriateness of some proposed node locations, particularly those near wetlands, low-density residential areas, or environmental buffers.
- Commissioners discussed whether some proposed nodes would realistically support commercial activity due to insufficient residential density nearby.
- There was interest in evaluating alternative node locations closer to downtown or higher-density areas that may better support neighborhood-serving businesses.
- Discussion included the challenge of balancing scale and type of commercial use, particularly whether larger or higher-traffic uses should be concentrated in denser areas.

Density and Viability

- Multiple commissioners emphasized that residential density is critical to the success of neighborhood commercial uses.
- Concerns were raised that amenities alone will not attract additional density and that targeted densification strategies may be necessary to support viable commerce.
- Commissioners discussed the relationship between business viability, customer base, and surrounding land use patterns.

Use Definitions and Regulations

- Questions were raised about how different commercial uses would be defined and categorized, including distinctions between specialty retail and similar uses such as galleries.
- Commissioners discussed how potential uses such as vape shops, would be regulated.

- There was support for allowing a broader range of neighborhood-serving uses throughout residential areas while still considering limitations on certain uses through an equity and community-impact lens.
- Additional clarification was requested regarding compliance standards, review processes, lighting requirements, and applicable noise regulations.

Commercial Nodes and Environmental Considerations

- Some commissioners suggested that creation of neighborhood commercial nodes may warrant a separate planning effort.
- Environmental considerations, including wetlands and critical area buffers, were identified as important constraints that should shape future zoning decisions.
- Commissioners discussed the importance of taking an ecological approach to zoning while still allowing appropriate development outside sensitive areas.

Discussion Questions:

Conversions and Live/Work Uses

- Commissioners discussed whether live/work units would be permitted and how standards for conversions would differ from requirements for new construction.
- Questions were raised about regulatory barriers that may discourage small-scale commercial conversions.
- There was support for ensuring frontage improvement requirements do not become barriers to adaptive reuse or small business establishment.
- Commissioners requested clarification on review procedures and public notice requirements for conversion projects.
- Examples from nearby jurisdictions, including Bothell, were referenced as potential case studies for successful conversion projects.

Operating Hours

- Commissioners generally supported establishing baseline operating hour standards for neighborhood commercial uses.
- Discussion included whether certain business types, such as kennels, may require different operating standards.

Signage

- Commissioners generally supported modest, neighborhood-scaled signage that allows businesses to be visible without significantly altering neighborhood character.
- There was broad opposition to large or freestanding signs.

- Discussion included possible limitations on sign lighting and hours of illumination.
- Commissioners noted concerns about A-frame signs obstructing sidewalks and discussed scaling signage appropriately to fit the surrounding neighborhood context.
- Alternative signage materials beyond plastic were also suggested.

Next Steps:

May 19th meeting will be canceled.

Planning Commission Meeting June 2, 2026. Housing Strategy Plan.
Neighborhood Retail.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Banaszynski adjourned the meeting at 9:19PM.

Shannon Tipple-Leen

Planning Commission Clerk

Approved by Planning Commission on: 6/2/2026