

TO: City Council

FROM: John Marchione, Mayor

DATE: January 4, 2011

SUBJECT: APPROVAL: SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the Sustainability Principles as shown in Attachment A.

II. DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Rob Odle, Planning Director, 425-556-2417

Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager, 425-556-2411

Sarah Stiteler, Senior Planner, 425-556-2469

Pete Sullivan, Senior Planner, 425-556-2406

III. BACKGROUND

More than 85 people participated as part of Redmond's November 3, 2010, community conversation on sustainability. The purpose of the event was to ask people who live, work, shop or recreate in Redmond to share their ideas about what sustainability means in Redmond. The results will inform work during the coming year on updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan, as well as Redmond's sustainability initiatives as a whole.

On December 7, 2010, the *Livable Redmond Final Report* and sustainability principles contained therein were presented to the City Council. Councilmember Myers requested additional discussion on the sustainability principles by Council at a subsequent study session, to consider the role of city government in relation to the principles. Staff prepared a matrix for the December 14, 2010, study session illustrating how sustainability principles are consistent with existing Comprehensive Plan goals and policies as well as current City actions. During the December 14, 2010, study session, Councilmembers indicated this information helped to provide the context within which the sustainability principles and possible future City responses could be viewed.

Staff recommends that Council approve the Sustainability Principles as shown in Attachment A.

IV. NEXT STEPS

City staff will use the sustainability principles to inform development of proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan. The Planning

Commission and City Council will also consider these principles and other input as they review the proposed updates during the coming year. In addition, written and oral comments are encouraged as individual plan elements are developed and reviewed by Planning Commission and City Council. Ultimately, citizen feedback will be integrated into Redmond's Plans, which are the blueprint for investment and development in the City for the next 20 years, including future actions regarding transportation, the environment, housing, human services, economic vitality and other areas.

VI. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Sustainability Principles

/s/

Robert G. Odle, Planning Director

12/22/2010

Date

Approved for Council Agenda: /s/

John Marchione, Mayor

12/23/2010

Date



SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES

On November 3, 2010, the City of Redmond held a community forum entitled Livable Redmond: A Community Conversation about Sustainability. The purpose of the event was to ask people who live, work, shop or recreate in Redmond to share their ideas about what sustainability means for Redmond. Over 85 persons worked in small groups to respond to the statement, “To me, a sustainable Redmond community means...” . The groups also identified top priorities for each of the three legs of sustainability and described what they see as the benefit of these priorities to Redmond. Their responses have been expressed in the following statements which describe the various ways in which sustainability can be addressed. Further, these statements, or “principles” will inform work on the 2011 updates to the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan as well as Redmond’s sustainability initiatives as a whole.

In Redmond, a sustainable community means...

- *Having a shared community identity that is special and unique, based on Redmond’s beautiful natural environment, its vibrant employment areas and diverse community of residents.*

The idea of having a community identity, with opportunities for people to connect with their neighbors and sharing a sense of place was clearly a high priority among all groups. Participants identified physical development as needing to be human in scale, i.e. to be accessible and feel comfortable, and to provide opportunities for community gathering places, or “third places”, which would encourage social connection beyond one’s home and place of employment. Participants also spoke to the importance of including green places where people can walk. Other means to promote a sense of belonging and social connection include encouraging community activities, arts and culture, such as those that celebrate Redmond’s heritage and diversity.

- *Having equitable access to goods, services and employment.*

Having a transportation system that works and is safe for all ages and abilities is the primary means of providing physical access to a variety of goods, services, educational opportunities and employment. It includes support for all modes, such as light rail, automobiles, bus, bicycling, and walking. The transportation system should provide choices and connect neighborhoods by modes other than just by automobile. Walking and bicycling options support a healthy, active lifestyle, which in turn promotes a more sustainable community and environment.

Participants also spoke to the human aspect of equitable access, noting that Redmond residents represent a broad range of cultural groups and income levels. The culture of



the City should be welcoming and inclusive to all, and residents should be able to access services needed to meet their basic human needs.

- *Having housing choices that are accessible to residents with various incomes, ages and abilities.*

Housing choices and the availability of affordable housing was also identified as significant. It is a means to promote a diverse and healthy community as well as to provide access to goods, services and employment. This allows people to live and work in Redmond, promoting community cohesion and potentially reducing traffic congestion. Housing choices result in a community where residents of all ages, income levels, abilities and cultural backgrounds may locate.

- *Valuing environmental quality, and supporting choices that minimize impacts to the environment.*

Participants emphasized that organizations, businesses, individuals and the City should promote policies and actions that identify Redmond as a leader in environmental stewardship. They suggested that the City and other organizations should recognize environmentally efficient businesses, and create a culture in which innovation and conservation are encouraged. Using open areas and individual yards for small scale food production was also suggested as a sustainable practice that should be considered.

- *Recognizing the importance of community awareness, education and engagement.*

Participants were pleased and in some instances, surprised to learn about the actions that the City and other organizations are already involved in that promote sustainability. Many groups identified the need to expand education and awareness of these efforts, resulting in a greater sense of ownership as well as a better understanding of how individual actions affect the larger community. Participants also spoke to the value of engagement: as residents and businesses identify with the community and become more involved, whether it be to protect the environment, support local businesses or simply to take part in community conversations, the result will likely be greater creativity, innovation and sustainability.

- *Having a strong local economy.*

A variety of business opportunities will encourage a diverse, vibrant economic base. A wide sector of businesses is desirable, including smaller, local businesses, as well as large businesses, and will help the City to maintain an adaptable and sustainable



economy. Further, a variety of businesses may result in a supply of jobs at different income levels. Another area of opportunity is the development of vocational training for “green” jobs. Agriculture within the City and nearby also supports job creation, and may enhance the environment. The ability to “buy local” promotes a healthy economy and lifestyle.

The above principle statements speak to one or more of the three aspects of sustainability. Ultimately, they describe an overall high quality of life in Redmond, now and into the future.

Benefits to the community would be...

- *Increased awareness, support and ownership of sustainable efforts, and environmental protection*

Increased community awareness and support of sustainable efforts is a benefit that will in turn create a magnitude of additional benefits in all areas: environmental, economic and social cohesion.

- *Healthier and more independent lives as a result of greater and healthier choices*

Greater individual and community health and independence may result from having more choices available, such as how one travels to daily activities, opportunities for obtaining locally grown food, and the accessibility of pleasant and safe recreational areas.

- *A more caring, supportive community*

Redmond will continue to be experienced by residents and businesses as a good place for all people: families with young children, young singles and older people, people with various incomes or abilities, as well as a people from a diversity of racial and cultural backgrounds. Increased attachment of businesses and residents to their community will continue to rekindle the feeling that Redmond is a positive place to live, work and play.

- *A more vibrant, diverse and healthy economy*

A healthy and diverse economy is more resilient to shifts or downturns. As one of the foundations of a sustainable community, it will provide the stability for businesses and residents to obtain necessary services and may encourage opportunities for further innovation.



- *Better, more efficient use of resources – “less is more”*

One of the key benefits of a community that is striving to become more sustainable is the efficient use of resources, and a shift in attitude towards more conscientious consumption of resources. It is the basis for the City’s working definition of sustainability – which is, “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Participants emphatically supported the concept of using resources in a manner that is thoughtful of future Redmond residents.