

Planning Commission Report

To: City Council

From: Planning Commission

Staff Contacts: Robert G. Odle, Director of Planning and Community Development, 425-556-2417

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

Sarah Stiteler, AICP (Co-lead; Goals, Vision, Framework Policies),
Senior Planner, 425-556-2469

Pete Sullivan, (Co-lead) Senior Planner, 425-556-2406

Kimberly Dietz (Land Use), Senior Planner, 425-556-2415

Eric McConaghy (Land Use), Associate Planner, 425-556-2414

Terry Marpert, AICP (Transportation), Principal Planner, 425-556-2428

Jeff Churchill, AICP (Urban Centers), Senior Planner, 425-556-2492

Gary Lee (Urban Centers), Senior Planner, 425-556-2418

Date: March 30, 2011

File Numbers and Title: 2010-2011 Periodic Update of the Comprehensive Plan (L100259):

Title:

- Goals, Vision, Framework Policies
- Land Use Element
- Urban Centers Element and associated development regulations
- Transportation Element

**Planning
Commission
Recommendation:** Approval

Recommended Action: Adopt amendments to elements and associated development regulations as shown in Exhibits A, C, E, F, H

Summary: Recommended amendments are part of the 2010-11 Periodic Update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Key updates are summarized below.

Goals, Vision and Framework Policies

- Update this element to reflect sustainability as the overarching theme and to provide for economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity; and
- Revise references to “small-town feel” for Redmond to “comfortable and connected feel”.

Land Use

- Update growth targets for population and employees to 2030 horizon, consistent with Redmond’s vision;
- Refine and add policies according to adopted sustainability principles, including policies to support opportunities for equitable access to food and human services, community gardens, sustainable development, and design and operation of public facilities in a manner that takes health into account; and
- Add policy language that recognizes green infrastructure as a public asset, sustaining Redmond’s social, economic and environmental health.

Urban Centers

- Reorganize the element to reduce duplication by consolidating policies common to the Downtown and Overlake;
- Update language to reflect work done on the Redmond Central Connector, Downtown Central Park, the Downtown East-West Corridor Study, and light rail planning;
- Clarify text and policies to more clearly provide for consideration of increased height in the Employment Area while maintaining character elements;
- Add a “compliance with regional requirements” section to show how the Urban Centers Element complies with various Puget

Sound Regional Council requirements, including addressing greenhouse gas emissions;

- Related code updates (transmitted earlier to Council as part of the 152nd Avenue NE Corridor Study and scheduled for adoption on April 5, 2011):
 - Provide an alternative method for calculating required residential density/floor area.
 - Update street cross sections as an outcome of the 152nd Avenue NE Corridor Study.

Transportation

- Prioritize, plan for and invest in a sustainable transportation system that serves Redmond's preferred land use pattern and vision;
- Support a multimodal transportation system that improves connections and access within Redmond and between Redmond and the region, including movement of freight and goods;
- Emphasize safe and efficient travel choices, using advanced technology and transportation demand management to increase efficient use of the transportation system;
- Update policy direction related to the City's bicycle and pedestrian plans;
- Add policies regarding shared local streets and construction of facilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Encourage the use of alternative fuels, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reductions in stormwater run-off and impervious surfaces;
- Emphasize design that supports the environment and community;
- Emphasize the need for a sustainable financial strategy; and
- Emphasize use of transportation performance measures to ensure system efficiency and accountability.

Reasons the Proposal should be Adopted:

The Planning Commission recommends adopting the amendments because the proposal:

- Reflects work that has been advanced or completed since the last periodic Comprehensive Plan update in 2004;
- Incorporates Redmond’s principles for sustainability;
- Incorporates other directions endorsed by the City Council;
- Reflects changes to the Growth Management Act and changes to regional plans;
- Extends the planning horizon for the Comprehensive Plan to 2030; and
- Better organizes the elements as a whole.

Recommended Findings of Fact

1. Public Hearing and Notice.

a. Public Hearing Date.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on this amendment on February 16, 2011. Minutes for the hearing are included in Exhibit J.

b. Notice.

The public hearing notice was published in the Seattle Times. Public notices were posted in City Hall and in the Redmond Library. Additionally, hearing notification was posted on the City’s web site and mailed to several hundred citizens that have indicated interest in planning issues. The hearing date was also included in a project newsletter mailed to several hundred citizens in January 2011.

2. Public Comments.

Representatives from Microsoft Corporation and Sustainable Redmond spoke at the public hearing and provided written testimony. Written testimony was also provided by Pedro Castro, a local architect (Exhibit K).

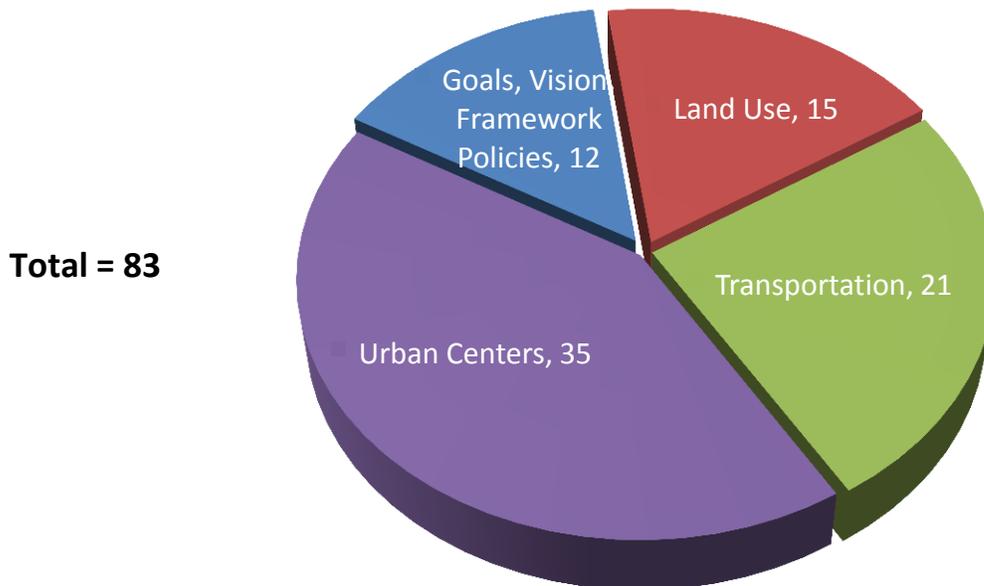
The Planning Commission discussed all public comments, and portions were added to the issue matrices for further examination and resolution (Exhibits B, D, G, I) Summaries of discussion issues originating from public comment are also provided below.

Recommended Conclusions

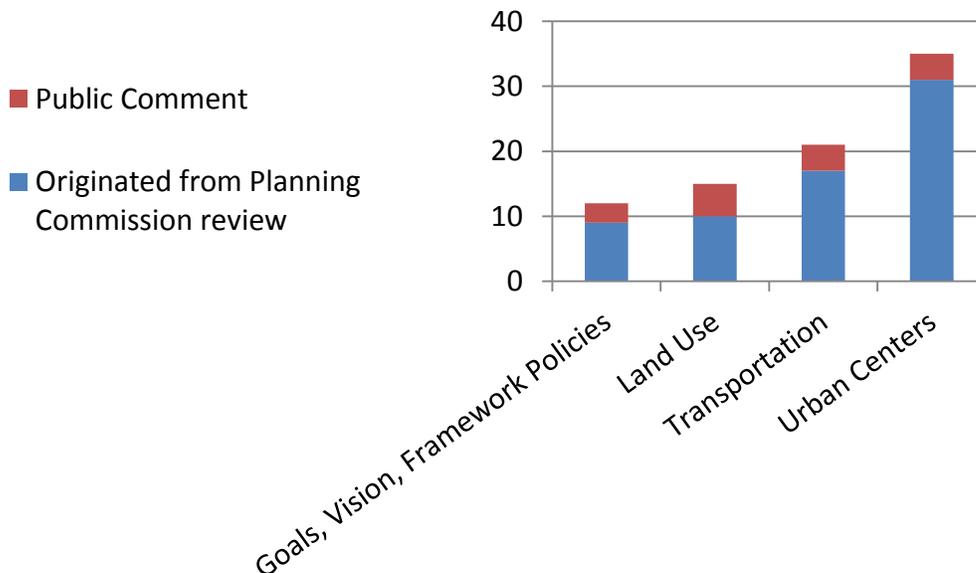
1. Issues Raised by the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission identified a total of 83 discussion issues. The following charts show the: 1) distribution of discussion issues by element; 2) the source of discussion issues (public comment or Planning Commission); and 3) a comparison of the number of issues that are specific to one element versus the number of cross-over issues that involve more than one element.

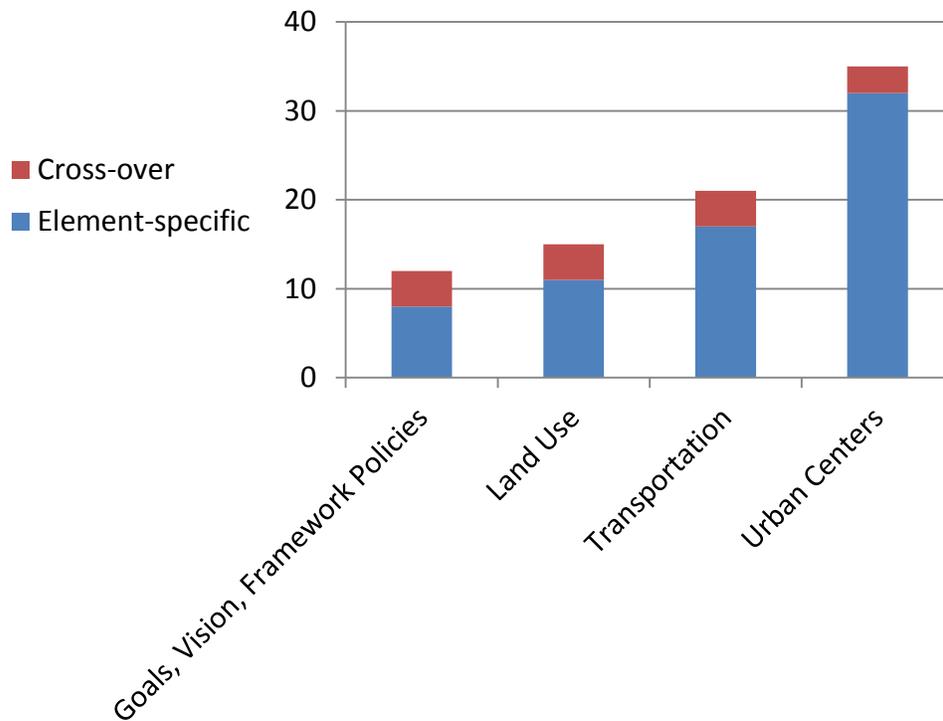
1. Discussion Issues by Element



2. Issue Sources - Planning Commission vs Public Comments



3. Element - specific vs Cross-over Issues



All 83 discussion issues are presented in the Final Issue Matrices, (Exhibits B, D, G, I)¹. Planning Commission’s major discussion topics for each element are highlighted below, with a description of key discussion points and resultant action.

Goals, Vision, Framework Policies

- In response to public comment, the Planning Commission modified proposed new policy (FW-7.5) to address both the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation of impacts.**

Staff proposed a new policy, FW- 7.5, to address reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and criteria air pollutants. The new policy also meets State Department of Commerce and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) requirements to incorporate such policies in Redmond’s Comprehensive Plan. Cindy Jayne, on behalf of Sustainable Redmond, noted that the proposed new policy should be expanded to include not only the reduction but

¹ Cross-over issues are marked with an *asterisk in the left-hand column, adjacent to the Issue ID number.

also the *mitigation of the impacts* of ghg emissions and criteria air pollutants. The Planning Commission agreed that adding the concept of mitigation to the policy language was important.

2. Endorsed updates that support opportunities for improved human health and economic vitality.

Overall, the Planning Commission concurred that changes to text and policies that support opportunities for improved human health and economic vitality also support a more sustainable community. These recommended changes are reflected in the Goals, Vision and Framework Policies Element – in text and framework policies, as well as in other Elements, such as Land Use, Urban Centers and Transportation. This language also meets State Department of Commerce and PSRC requirements for Comprehensive Plan updates.

3. Recommended that text and policies should recognize and describe role and importance of both urban centers and other neighborhoods in a sustainable community.

The Planning Commission discussed and acknowledged the existing Comprehensive Plan vision which emphasizes two urban centers in Downtown and Overlake. They further stated their interest in other neighborhoods being recognized throughout the Comprehensive Plan as also having an important role in the overall fabric of the City.

4. Considered adding policy on integration of gray water systems in new construction as part of Natural Environment or Utilities elements.

In response to public comment by Sustainable Redmond, the Planning Commission concurred that there should be further consideration of adding a policy that encourages the use of reclaimed water. They agreed that the location of such a policy(ies) could be within the Natural Environment and/or Utilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

5. Considered the need for adoption of targets for green building established by the Architecture Challenge 2030.

Mr. Pedro Castro submitted a written comment that asked if the Planning Commission was aware of the Architecture Challenge program and asked if the targets established within this program were going to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan update. The Planning Commission concurred with staff that the changes proposed to the Goals/Vision/Framework text and policies as proposed support green building

techniques. Further, the City is involved in many programs now and anticipates further development of programs to encourage or require green building techniques. The adoption of the specific program targets as outlined by the Architecture Challenge 2030 could be an additional means of implementing Comprehensive Plan policies which would occur following staff analysis, recommendation and subsequent review and adoption by City Council.

Land Use Element

1. Discussed whether the 2030 growth targets are supported by an analysis of what the natural resources of Redmond can sustainably support and whether they provide for a sufficient amount of commercial growth (in anticipation of high-tech development in Overlake); agreed they do for both.

- When considering changes to land use and zoning designation as well as updates to growth targets, Redmond takes into account multiple factors, including the impacts to natural resources. Redmond's Planning Commission and City Council apply this information when considering and deciding on zoning changes. The growth target numbers for 2030 are based on the City's existing zoning. The Planning Commission acknowledged that, in this manner, the growth targets for 2030 are supported by consideration of Redmond's natural resources.
- The Planning Commission considered that the 2030 growth targets:
 - 1) Are consistent with the employment growth forecasted by the Puget Sound Regional Council and are higher than the City's commitment through the King County Countywide Planning Policies;
 - 2) Anticipate that approximately two-thirds of the new commercial floor area will be developed in Overlake and Downtown, and of that, the majority will occur in Overlake; and
 - 3) Reflect the amount of new commercial development planned for Overlake as part of the 2007 neighborhood plan update and the amount analyzed in the associated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. In total, this is an increase of 4.5 million square feet of commercial space above the previous plan.

Redmond tracks progress in achieving the growth targets and reports annually through the Community Indicators program. This provides an opportunity for ongoing review of

the adequacy of the City's growth targets. Noting this, the Planning Commission found the growth targets sufficient.

2. Sought clarification of Comprehensive Plan policy toward agricultural, rural and recreational uses; language summarizing Redmond's policies regarding agriculture uses to be added to the Land Use Element in the form of explanatory text or policy as part of completion of the Comprehensive Plan update later in 2011.

- The Commission considered the City's relationship between agricultural and recreational uses. Their deliberation included aspects of support for agricultural uses both within Redmond and in rural areas, the difference between commercial agriculture and community gardens, and agreements concerning land designation, the preservation of the urban growth area boundary, and King County's Farmland Preservation Program.
- The Planning Commission agreed to reserve additional discussion of this topic for later in 2011 as part of the Comprehensive Plan reconciliation process. This allows for changes in the Land Use Element to be consistent with City Council's expected action on April 5, 2011 to change remaining property zoned Agriculture to Urban Recreation as part of the Zoning Code Rewrite. It also allows for these changes to be coordinated with the upcoming policy discussion regarding small animal husbandry.

3. Discussed policy LU-36, which encourages access to commercial areas and services through a "well-distributed system" of services throughout the City and supported policy as recommended. Agreed to revisit this policy if necessary following Council's decision on Neighborhood Commercial amendments.

- Initially, the Planning Commission considered whether all land use and zoning designations equitably allow the development and operation of neighborhood commercial as a method for ensuring access to goods and services close to both work and home. The Commission expressed interest in ensuring that daytime employment populations had walkable and bikeable access to businesses such as cafes. The Commission also considered whether the City wishes to continue supporting a "well-distributed system" of commercial uses as called for in policy LU-36 that serve the needs of residential neighborhoods, workplaces, and the greater Redmond community.

In addition, the Planning Commission asked for clarification on the City's intended level of support in advance of additional discussion regarding permitting commercial uses based on underlying land use and zoning designations.

Recognizing the City Council's concurrent review of recommended amendments to Neighborhood Commercial policies and regulations, the Commission supported delaying additional conversation pending the Council's final action. In recognition of the City Council's concurrent review of amendments updating Neighborhood Commercial policies and regulations, the Commission agreed to delay additional consideration of policy LU-36 until after the Council's final action. Staff will provide the Planning Commission a summary of the Council's final action regarding Neighborhood Commercial policies and regulations in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan reconciliation process.

4. Discussed and supported policies regarding access to community and corporate gardens and healthy food sources.

- Cindy Jayne, representing Sustainable Redmond, spoke to the importance of access to community gardens and locally grown produce, and commented that the proposed policy regarding community gardens should call for locating these to ensure that every citizen has easy biking and walking access to community gardens. Ms. Jayne also referenced growing citizen interest in small animal husbandry pertaining to keeping chickens for egg production.
- The Planning Commission discussed several aspects of the proposed policy 17.1 regarding access to community gardens and expressed support for this direction. The Commission decided to modify this proposed policy to support community gardens on public open space in accessible locations throughout Redmond.
- In addition the Commission noted that policy LU-6 describes opportunities for accessing healthy food sources but that the City has not yet established a definition of these foods or their sources. The Commission agreed to consider a definition regarding healthy food once further work is completed as part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work, Healthy Eating/Active Living (HEAL) grant.
- The Commission noted Council's request to consider policies regarding small-animal husbandry during the Comprehensive Plan reconciliation process.

1. Recommended change to policy DT-3: from “small and independently-owned” to “small and locally-owned businesses”

The Planning Commission recommended changing the language of DT-3 to encourage, “small and locally-owned businesses.” The Commission did not wish to distinguish between franchise and non-franchise small businesses, reasoning that both contribute positively to the local economy.

2. Recommended strengthening language regarding preservation of mid-block pathways.

Commissioners noted that a mid-block pathway on private property had recently been closed (by the property owner as they were concerned about the neighbors using their parking stalls, and as the City did not have an easement for public access), and so policy language should be strengthened so that mid-block paths are both completed and then preserved over time. The recommended language is “Increase mobility within the Downtown by...completing and preserving...mid-block pedestrian walkways.”

3. Recommended that new development on both sides of the Redmond Central Connector integrate with the planned corridor.

Commissioners wished to ensure that redevelopment on both sides of the Redmond Central Connector be integrated with the vision for future development as described in the master planning effort currently underway. The Commission believed that existing policy language was unclear as to which side it addressed. The recommended language clearly states that redevelopment on “both sides” should integrate with the corridor.

4. Recommended reorganization of Urban Centers Element to reduce duplication of policies common to Downtown and Overlake.

Commissioners noted that there is significant overlap between Downtown and Overlake policies. The Commission supported reorganizing the document such that common Urban Center policies come first, followed by Downtown- and Overlake-specific policies. This reorganization has the effect of reducing the total number of policies.

5. Agreed to review Redmond Connector policies again after completion of the trolley feasibility study.

Policy DT-8 addresses the Redmond Central Connector, but makes no mention of the possibility of trolley service in the corridor. Commissioners were concerned that existing language precludes the possibility of trolley service. Ultimately, the Commission recommended keeping the language as is for now, pending the results of the trolley feasibility study, currently underway, and City Council adoption of the Final Corridor Master Plan.

6. Discussed and retained existing policies regarding parking at various locations in Overlake including near light rail station.

Microsoft Corporation testified that minimizing parking around light rail stations in Overlake may have negative consequences since the Overlake Transit Center station will be the interim East Link terminus for an undetermined number of years. Staff provided information about Sound Transit's plans to provide parking at Overlake Transit Center, Sound Transit's parking monitoring programs in jurisdictions along Central Link, and the City's preference to intercept regional trips at a park & ride in Southeast Redmond. The Planning Commission recommended retaining the existing language.

7. Supported clarifications to text and policies to more clearly provide for consideration of increased height in the Employment Area while maintaining character elements, such as "campus-like", and retaining non-residential development target of 19.9 million square feet.

Microsoft Corporation testified that certain terminology, like "campus-like" and "mid-rise" might preclude any future conversations about increasing height limits in Overlake even while the City plans to accommodate 19.9 million square feet of non-residential development by 2030 (up from 15.4 million square feet through 2012). The Planning Commission supported removing the words "mid-rise", but retaining "campus-like" as a descriptor of the Employment Area. In addition, the Commission supported clarifying policy language about treelines to provide better direction to City staff and project applicants, and to balance City objectives around tree protection and accommodating growth in urban centers.

8. Supported future reconsideration of Overlake Urban Center boundaries to include properties west of SR- 520.

Microsoft Corporation testified that the current urban center boundary, which includes land east of SR-520 but not west of SR-520 (with minor exceptions), does not make sense in light of actual development on the ground. The Planning Commission supports future reconsideration of the boundary, but understands that revisiting the boundary will require significant outreach with the City of Bellevue and the larger community. This item should be considered as part of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan amendment docket.

Transportation Element

1. Modified proposed policy TR-4 to recognize the City’s complete streets ordinance.

In reviewing the Urban Centers Element, the Planning Commission discussed the Complete Streets ordinance (RMC 12.6), which in part states that:

“The City of Redmond will plan for, design and construct all new transportation projects to provide appropriate accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and persons of all abilities in comprehensive and connected networks.”

The Commission decided that there should be specific policy support of this ordinance in the Transportation Element. The Commission revised Policy TR-4 to address Complete Streets, and support the Complete Streets ordinance in RMC 12.06.

2. Discussed and supported existing policy TR-20 which supports consideration of reduced parking ratios as more travel options become available.

Microsoft testified that property owners should not be punished for achieving mode split targets by reducing parking ratios as more travel options become available. The Commission discussed this issue, and concluded that evaluating and as appropriate, reducing the number of parking spaces as more travel options become available is consistent with the City’s land use and transportation vision. The Commission recommended retaining the existing policy language.

- 3. Discussed and supported existing policy TR-32 which is intended to recognize the importance of equally valuing community character and transportation capacity, and where there are conflicts, to take steps to minimize or mitigate the impacts.**

Microsoft testified that the design of transportation improvements should not value community character equally with transportation capacity in all cases. Some important transportation improvements may conflict to some degree with community character. The Commission discussed this issue and agreed that existing policy TR-32 is intended to recognize the importance of equally valuing community character and transportation capacity and where there are conflicts, to take steps to minimize or mitigate the impacts consistent with City design standards. The Commission recommended retaining the existing policy language.

- 4. Discussed whether mode split goals for Downtown and Overlake should be in the Urban Center or Transportation elements.**

The Commission agreed with staff that mode split goals for Downtown and Overlake are best located in the Urban Center Element since these goals are the core of plans for the Downtown and Overlake urban centers. VISION 2040 directs local jurisdictions with regional growth centers to develop subarea plans for those centers, with the requirement that these sub-area plans include mode split goals for the centers.

2. *Recommended Conclusions of the Technical Committee.*

The recommended conclusions in the Technical Committee Report (Exhibit J) should be adopted as conclusions.

3. *Planning Commission Recommendation.*

The Planning Commission adopted motions to recommend approval of amendments to the elements and development regulations as shown in Exhibits A, C, E, F, H, by a vote of 6-0 at its March 16, 2011 meeting. The Planning Commission approved their report to City Council on March 30, 2011.

List of Exhibits

- Exhibit A: Recommended amendment to Goals, Vision and Framework Policies Element**
- Exhibit B: Final Issues Matrix for Goals, Vision and Framework Policies Element**
- Exhibit C: Recommended amendment to Land Use Element**
- Exhibit D: Final Issues Matrix for Land Use Element**
- Exhibit E: Recommended amendment to Urban Centers Element**
- Exhibit F: Recommended amendment to the Redmond Community Development Guide for the Urban Centers Element**
- Exhibit G: Final Issues Matrix for Urban Centers Element**
- Exhibit H: Recommended amendment to Transportation Element**
- Exhibit I: Final Issues Matrix for Transportation Element**
- Exhibit J: Public Hearing Minutes**
- Exhibit K: Written Public Comment**
- Exhibit L: Technical Committee Report and attachments**

Robert G. Odle, Director of Planning and Community Development

Date

Thomas T. Hinman, Planning Commission Chairperson

Date

Approved for Council Agenda _____

John Marchione, Mayor

Date