



TO: Mayor Marchione and City Council

FROM: Rob Odle, Director, Planning and Community Development, 425-556-2417
Colleen Kelly, Assistant Director, Community Planning, 425-556-2423
Lori Peckol, AICP, Policy Planning Manager, 425-556-2411
Jeff Churchill, AICP, Senior Planner, 425-556-2492

DATE: February 19, 2013

SUBJECT: STAFF REPORT: OVERLAKE SEPA PLANNED ACTION UPDATE

The purpose of this staff report is to brief the City Council on a proposed amendment to the Redmond Zoning Code concerning the Overlake SEPA Planned Action, and to provide an opportunity for questions about the proposal. Staff briefed the Planning and Public Works Committee on this topic on February 12, 2013. The Planning Commission Report on this topic was delivered to Council members separately on February 15, 2013.

BACKGROUND

The City of Redmond established the Overlake State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Planned Action in 1999 in conjunction with the Overlake Neighborhood Plan and Bellevue-Redmond Overlake Transportation Study Update (Ord. 2025).

A SEPA planned action is an alternative method of environmental review under state law. The SEPA Handbook states that a planned action:

"[S]hifts environmental review of a project from the time a permit application is made to an earlier phase in the planning process. The intent is to provide a more streamlined environmental review process at the project stage by conducting more detailed environmental analysis during planning. Early environmental review provides more certainty to permit applicants with respect to what will be required and to the public with respect to how the environmental impacts will be addressed."

Projects that are determined to be "covered" by the planned action do not undergo further project-level environmental review; for these projects, environmental review happened at the EIS stage when the plan was adopted. These projects are still subject to the provisions of the Redmond Zoning Code addressing critical areas, transportation standards, and many other development standards.

Redmond last updated the Overlake SEPA Planned Action in 2009 (Ord. 2493) following a significant update to the Overlake Neighborhood Plan. The 2009 update extended the horizon year of the planned action to 2030 and updated land use information to be consistent with the updated neighborhood plan. This recommended update would add environmental documents

completed since 2007 to the catalog of environmental documents that form the basis of the planned action.

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission recommended adoption of the proposed amendment at its January 23, 2013, meeting. The Commission concurred with staff's recommendation to update the planned action in order to incorporate all relevant environmental documents.

The Commission held a hearing on January 16, 2013. Two people testified during the hearing: Tom Hinman and Mary Wirta. Both were concerned that development projects that have been proposed as part of the planned action are not in keeping with City policies on tree retention.

The Commission also sees opportunities for improving how the public is engaged in the environmental review of projects that are part of a planned action. As noted above, for planned action projects there are no further public comment opportunities related to SEPA at the project level. While the Commission is not recommending particular process changes at this time, it plans to work with staff to develop recommendations for future Council consideration.

COUNCIL REVIEW SCHEDULE

Staff invites questions as part of the February 19, 2013, staff report. Council action on the proposal will be scheduled for a future regular Council meeting, most likely in late March 2013.