

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Judd Black, Development Review Division Manager, 425-556-2426
Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager, 425-556-2411
Lynda Aparicio, Senior Planner 425-556-2438

DATE: May 13, 2009

SUBJECT: RCDG Rewrite Guiding Principles

The purpose of this memo is to update Commission members on work completed thus far with respect to the RCDG rewrite project and specifically to seek feedback on the draft principles that will guide the future rewrite of the code. Please contact Lynda Aparicio if you have any questions prior to the meeting.

I. BACKGROUND

At the beginning of 2009, staff began the first phase of the Redmond Community Development Guide (RCDG) rewrite. The primary goal of the first phase is to work with a consultant team to provide a comprehensive analysis of the code and identify the scope and methodology of the rewrite. In part, the methodology of the rewrite will be captured in a set of guiding principles that will be used to guide staff and the Code Rewrite Commission (CRC) in preparing and reviewing the new proposed code. The principles are also intended to guide review of future amendments to the new code.

Throughout the first quarter of this year, staff and the consultant team have been working with key stakeholders to gain initial feedback with respect to the challenges presented with the current RCDG and opportunities for improvement for the new code. That feedback was presented at the joint Council/Planning Commission/Design Review Board meeting on March 3, 2009.

On April 21st the City Council endorsed a mission statement for the project. This mission statement (shown on Attachment A) was developed in response to the feedback received from the first round of stakeholder meetings and sets the general scope and overarching purpose of the rewrite project.

Additionally, the feedback received from the first round of stakeholder meetings was consolidated and assessed to develop a set of draft guiding principles that, as stated above, will be used to guide the future rewrite effort. These draft principles are being presented at a second Community Stakeholder Meeting to be held May 18th and to the Design Review Board on May 21st.

II. REQUESTED ACTION

For this meeting, staff and the consultant are seeking your initial feedback and input on the draft principles (attached). Staff and the consultant team will be at your meeting.

III. NEXT STEPS

Planning Commission's extended agenda includes a second study session on the proposed principles on May 27th. At that meeting, staff will seek a recommendation from the Planning Commission on the proposed principles for the City Council. For the May 27th meeting, staff will provide an amended set of draft principles based upon feedback received from the Planning Commission, as well as the community. The Council is scheduled to hold a study session on the principles June 9th, followed by adoption of the principles on June 16th.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Principles

ATTACHMENT A

Redmond Zoning Code Rewrite Over-Arching Principles April 21, 2009 DRAFT

Zoning Code Rewrite Mission Statement (adopted 4/21/09)

Create a Zoning Code that:

- Improves clarity, conciseness, predictability and usability for residents, development professionals and the business community;
- Maintains the integrity of code concepts adopted over time by the City Council while utilizing new ideas where appropriate to achieve these concepts; and
- Implements clearly and effectively the goals, visions and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of these principles is to guide the Code Rewrite Commission's evaluation of proposed zoning code changes that are part of the 2009-11 code rewrite. City staff and officials will also use these principles to evaluate amendments proposed after the completion of the 2009-11 rewrite.

Regulations

These principles promote predictability of permit review and project quality, and regulations that reflect desired outcomes as expressed through public policy.

1. Carry out the Comprehensive Plan with a clear connection to adopted policies.
2. Convey expectations of quality clearly and succinctly with illustrations and examples.
3. Infuse regulations with objectives of sustainability.
4. Provide flexibility within defined parameters as a method of meeting the intent of regulations.
5. Use easily-understood language, with defined legal and technical terms where useful. Avoid multiple definitions of terms.
6. Clearly convey maximum development yields.

Organization

These principles provide guidance for how the zoning code should be structured, the location and consolidation of important information, the relationships between key components, and how the needs of stakeholders should be reflected in the organization of the document.

1. Group regulations in a simple, logical, and efficient structure, and provide clear references to relevant code sections when they are separated from core information.
2. Provide visual aids to guide the user and explain important regulations.
3. Place basic regulations in obvious locations, outside of footnotes and other easy-to-miss places.
4. Separate definitions, procedures, and regulations.
5. Eliminate redundant regulations. Combine similar sets of regulations, and clearly identify when regulations apply.
6. Reduce complexity and eliminate excessive detail to reduce code size.

Process

These principles ensure timely and legally defensible land use decisions, and ensure that decision-making is predictable, transparent and consistent with adopted standards and policy.

1. Incorporate legal review into the early stages of code revision.
2. Provide early notice, and opportunities for timely input corresponding to the action proposed.
3. Ensure that decision-making timelines meet or are quicker than statutory requirements.
4. Choose a decision-maker and review process based on level of discretion appropriate for the proposed action.
5. Describe the code's procedures clearly and succinctly. Use brochures and online information to help users understand the review processes.
6. Improve transparency by consolidating processes for related development actions.

Process for Zoning Code Development/Review and Adoption

These principles guide the rewriting of the code to ensure the rewrite is conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner by encouraging and assisting citizens, stakeholders, and interested parties to understand and participate in the crafting of a new zoning code.

1. Seek input from user groups and the larger community.
2. Ensure clear communication, open conversation, and a variety of public involvement opportunities and formats.
3. Document public involvement and findings as decisions are made to provide transparency and accountability.
4. Ensure a clear understanding of the project scope as being limited to code rewrites that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Group formal consideration of regulations into similar subjects to allow interested parties to participate in the changes most relevant to them.
6. Commit to a process for code development, public review and decision-making that will enable the City Council to adopt the zoning code rewrite during the first quarter of 2011.