



MEMO TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Technical Committee

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DATE: April 10, 2009

SUBJECT: Richardson Development Guide Amendment, L070257:  
**ADDENDUM TO TECHNICAL REPORT, DATED 5/21/08**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

On July 15, 2008, the Richardson Development Guide Amendment (DGA) was before the City Council for their review and decision. Previously, and consistent with the Technical Committee recommendation, the Planning Commission recommended denial of the land use designation and zoning change requested by the applicant from Multi-Family Urban, (R-12) to General Commercial, (GC). (See Attachment A – site location). After considering the Planning Commission recommendation, the City Council moved to refer the DGA back to the Planning Commission for further study, to evaluate how the upcoming West Lake Sammamish Way/Old Redmond Road Intersection Improvement Project could affect the Richardson property.

This memo provides additional information regarding the Intersection Improvement Project for West Lake Sammamish Way and Old Redmond Road, and supplements the Technical Committee Report, dated May 21, 2008. Per Council request, the Planning Commission will reconsider the Richardson Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendment along with the results of the Intersection Improvement Project design study, assessing possible impacts to the Richardson property, just southwest of the intersection. The second public hearing on the Richardson Comprehensive Plan Amendment is scheduled for April 29, 2009.

## **II. PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The majority of the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council deny this request and maintain the R-12 zoning/Multi-Family Urban land use designation for four primary reasons:

- The site is more appropriate for multi-family use than for commercial or mixed-use given its location, size, and vehicular access;
- Many commercial uses allowed under the requested zoning would be incompatible with existing surrounding residences;
- The proposal conflicts with established City policy to focus retail and office uses in the Downtown and Overlake urban centers; and
- The proposal conflicts with the adopted Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan.

In addition, a primary topic the Planning Commission considered was the potential impact of the site on the surrounding traffic conditions and pedestrian safety, as well as the adequacy of the site access for commercial uses.

A majority of the Commissioners recognized that commercial uses tend to generate more vehicular trips than residential uses and were concerned that the traffic conditions in the vicinity of the site would be more negatively impacted by commercial development on the property than by residential development.

The site currently is accessed from West Lake Sammamish Way (WLSW) but is limited to right-in, right-out in the SE bound direction only which was an additional concern. A majority felt that this limited access and the speeds at which traffic is moving on this portion of WLSW (as vehicles approach the SR 520 interchange) is inappropriate for commercial development, which is likely to generate additional traffic. (Attachment B - site photos).

## **III. CITY COUNCIL REVIEW**

In Spring 2008, Public Works staff were starting a traffic study to determine alternatives for improvements to the intersection of Old Redmond Road and West Lake Sammamish Way. On July 15, 2008, City Council approved the selection of DKS Associates to provide engineering design services to evaluate and develop preliminary design for improvements to the intersection of Old Redmond Road and West Lake Sammamish Way, and also to study pedestrian linkage in the corridor. In addition, because of its close proximity and potential impacts to the intersection of West Lake Sammamish Parkway and West Lake Sammamish Way, the consultant was also directed to evaluate potential impacts to that intersection.

The requested Richardson Development Guide Amendment (DGA) was also on the Council agenda of July 15, 2008. During Council consideration of the DGA, Ms. Richardson stated that she believed that access and traffic were the main reasons her request was not recommended by the Planning Commission, and that with the redesign of the intersection, and with the opportunity for her to give input to the intersection study, there could be improvements made that would address the Planning Commissions' concerns regarding ingress/egress to her property.

**The City Council concurred that the requested Richardson DGA should be considered in light of alternatives to be developed through the intersection improvement study. The Council moved unanimously to refer the amendment back to the Planning Commission to develop alternatives and to bring the matter back to the Council after reviewing and considering the results of the traffic study.**

#### **IV. OLD REDMOND ROAD/WEST LAKE SAMMAMISH WAY INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT REPORT – PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

The Old Redmond Road/West Lake Sammamish Way Intersection Improvement Report was completed in January, 2009. The primary purpose of the project was to look at options for improvements to the intersection of Old Redmond Road and West Lake Sammamish Way.

The report evaluated four alternatives which were believed to best address the issues presented in that area along the West Lake Sammamish Way Corridor. The alternatives selected included two signalization options (Alternative 1 and Alternative 2) and two roundabout options (Alternatives 3 and 4). Alternatives were evaluated against an established list of criteria, developed by the consultant and City of Redmond staff. (See Attachment B). The project limits do not actually include the Richardson property, but end at her property line. However, as part of the analysis of alternatives, the consultant was asked to look at access to the Richardson property within the overall project.

Although all four alternatives provided viable solutions to the present issues, the signalized “Regular T” intersection alternative was selected as the preferred alternative based on the ten evaluation criteria developed in the study. (Attachment C – Preferred Preliminary Design Alternative). Alternative 1 can be constructed quickly within the existing intersection, and with the lowest cost among all the alternatives; it also allows future expansion. This alternative would:

- Provide for installation of a traffic signal at the Old Redmond Road intersection
- Provide a 140 foot northbound left turn pocket on West Lake Sammamish Way
- Eastbound Old Redmond Road traffic has a protected phase to enter West Lake Sammamish Way therefore improving safety and operation.

- Improve channelization on Old Redmond Road, splitting and demarking left and right (north and southbound) turning movements onto West Lake Sammamish Way
- Provide minor improvements to street lighting

As a result, the northbound and southbound movements could run concurrently and the northbound left turn and eastbound left turn would have a protected phase. The new signal would require coordination with the signals at Redmond Way and West Lake Sammamish Parkway to help manage queuing. Alternative 1 was chosen as the preferred alternative because:

- It is the most cost effective
- It fits within existing right-of-way
- It is the best alternative for pedestrians & bicycles
- The signal minimizes potential conflict at the intersection
- Addition of left turn lanes will increase safety and minimize queuing on both Old Redmond Road and West Lake Sammamish Way

## **V. IMPACTS TO RICHARDSON PROPERTY**

While the overall changes resulting from the implementation of Alternative 1 will improve safety and circulation at the intersection, there are no anticipated impacts that will *significantly* affect the Richardson property. However, there are two ways in which some possible access improvements may occur to the Richardson property, though minor. As stated, the signal will provide alternate legs of the intersection to be paused when others have through traffic. When traffic from Old Redmond Road is turning either north or southbound onto West Lake Sammamish Way, cars heading southbound on West Lake Sammamish Way will be stopped. This will cause short gaps in traffic, such that the southbound speeds in front of the Richardson property may be a little slower, which then may result in more time to access to the property which now allows (and would continue to allow) right in/right out access only.

The other possible improvement to access on the Richardson property would occur if there was a new access to the site created from Old Redmond Road. The impact of the signal and the channelization improvements on Old Redmond Road will minimize the queuing up of cars along Old Redmond Road at peak hours, such that cars would not be waiting in a queue to access the site, presumably from a right in/right only movement.

These changes are minor, and again would not significantly improve access to the Richardson property. While some gaps will occur in traffic on West Lake Sammamish Way, these would not be of such a duration that vehicles either entering or exiting the property would necessarily experience cars moving at slower speeds on West Lake Sammamish Way while trying to do so. If an additional or alternative access to the property is created from Old Redmond Road, some improvement from existing conditions may occur by minimizing the queuing, but interruption to circulation and the

turning movements from Old Redmond Road southbound onto West Lake Sammamish Way may also result.

## **VI. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

In consideration of the Intersection Improvement Report prepared by DKS Associates, (January 16, 2009) and the recommended preferred alternative, the Technical Committee finds that there are not sufficient positive impacts to the Richardson site that can be anticipated as the result of the intersection improvements. On March 3, 2009 the City Council approved final design for the recommended improvements, which are expected to be constructed in the summer of 2009. As stated, these intersection improvements will improve vehicular circulation and safety, and have the potential to increase pedestrian and trail linkages as well as improve vehicular turning movements if additional funds become available. The recommended improvements do not physically involve the Richardson property and may improve access to the property in only minor ways.

**The Technical Committee recommends that the Development Guide Amendment requesting a change from Multi-Family Residential R-12 to General Commercial, GC, be denied.**

## **VII. ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Site Location indicating Proposed Zoning Change by Applicant  
Attachment B: Intersection Improvement – Evaluation Criteria  
Attachment C: Preferred Preliminary Design Alternative - graphic  
Attachment D: Planning Commission Report to Council, dated 7/9/08

Note: Several copies of the Old Redmond Road/West Lake Sammamish Way Intersection Improvement Report are available for review at Redmond City Hall or brief checkout.