



REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION

Sherri Nichols, Chair | Judy East, Vice-Chair
Roy Captain | Aaron Knopf
Denni Shefrin | Aparna Varadharajan

MINUTES

REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING Wednesday, February 9, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Nichols.

Commissioners Present: Chair Nichols, Vice-Chair East, Commissioners Captain, Shefrin, and Aparna

Excused Absence: Commissioner Knopf

Staff Present: Cathy Beam, Jeff Churchill, Glenn Coil, Beckye Frey, Ian Lefcourte, Jenny Lybeck and Sarah Pyle, Planning Department

Recording Secretary: Carolyn Garza, LLC

2. Approval of the Agenda

- *MOTION to approve the agenda* by Commissioner Captain. MOTION seconded by Vice Chairperson East. *The MOTION passed unanimously.*

3. Items from the Audience

Mr. Justin Bruening, River Trail Community, asked if the traffic element changes could consider increasing the safety of the bicycle lanes or facilities by swapping the bicycle lanes and parking lanes on streets. The bicycle lane should be closer to the sidewalk for parked car protection from the flow of traffic. This would increase safety as well as keeping cars from blocking the bicycle lane, not passing over the lane. Thin plastic traffic posts or concrete curbs could be used for division. Also, on attachment E page 7, there is a proposal for a road or trail on 160th Avenue Northeast connecting to another neighborhood further north. The road speed limit is currently 25 MPH, but speeding occurs regularly, and the swap of bicycle and parking lanes mentioned earlier could make this street safer with less visual space for drivers to feel comfortable speeding in. Chairperson Nichols replied that the issue would be discussed in detail going forward.

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4. 2022 Annual docket Item - Evans Creek Relocation Land Use Map, Zoning Map, and Shoreline Master Program Amendments - Public Hearing

Attachments: [Memo](#), [Attachment A - Planning Commission Issues Matrix](#), [Attachment B - Presentation](#)

Staff Contact: [Cathy Beam](#), Principal Planner 425-556-2429

Staff Presentation

Ms. Beam introduced the topic.

Commissioner Shefrin asked for clarification regarding views of property owners and impacts to existing land uses. Ms. Beam replied by describing areas on a map but without locations for the recording. The area would still be subject to the city Critical Areas regulations and Shoreline regulations, but the understanding was that the property owner is interested in industry zoning for a portion of the property and is looking at potentially selling development rights. Skanska is not concerned about the designation. Emily Flanagan, who has been working directly with property owners, was on the meeting call and stated that the property owners recognize the benefit of having the Shoreline jurisdiction taken off the usable portions of properties, an improvement given the other limitations of Critical Areas and wetland boundaries. The property owners understand that there will be a need for other agency recommendations during the process.

Commissioner Aparna stated appreciating the maps in the presentation and asked if there are any preservation or conservation requirements that will extend to the owners, or if owner responsibility will remain the same. Ms. Beam stated that responsibility would stay the same as wetlands currently exist. Moving the creek to the north to adjust limited areas had been discussed but Ecology has stated that the wetlands must be included.

Chairperson Nichols opened the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing

- *Chair Nichols opened the Public Hearing. There would be one verbal testimony.*

Mr. David Morton, 19934 Northeast Union Hill Road, Redmond, stated that Redmond has been planning to relocate Evans Creek for 20 years or more, but also has lacked sufficient funding. The time has come to steer the creek clear of polluted run-off from Watson Asphalt and DTG Recycling, previously All Wood Recycling. Evans Creek flows through both industrial lots and petroleum pollution contaminating water and oil sheens on the surface of wetlands north are of concern. A citizen had reported to Redmond City Council in the past that several oil trucks had been seen backed into the 50-foot buffer of the creek, about five feet from the creek and dripping fluids. The Code Enforcement Officer reported violations to several agencies and there may be a record of actions taken. Evans Creek has not been treated well by the owners of these industrial properties who appear to consider the creek a nuisance because of the buffer zone. Mr. Morton stated normally

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being opposed to relocating a creek, but the businesses have destroyed the habitats and ecosystems in and near the creek. Relocating the creek to the proposed channel will hopefully increase habitats, complexity, and functions.

- *Chairperson Nichols closed the Public Hearing for both verbal and written testimony.*

There were no additional questions from Commissioners Chairperson Nichols asked Ms. Beam to return to the Commission with a draft report for approval on February 23, 2022.

5. 2022 Annual Docket Item - Town Center Zone Policies - Public Hearing

Attachments: [Memo, Attachment A - Planning Commission Issues Matrix](#), [Attachment B - Presentation](#)

Staff Contact: [Glenn Coil](#), Senior Planner 425-556-2742

Staff Presentation

Mr. Coil introduced the item.

Chairperson Nichols opened the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing

- *Chair Nichols opened the Public Hearing. There would be two verbal testimonies.*

Mr. Patrick Woodruff, 1085 Northeast 4th Street, Bellevue, stated being with the local office of Hines, working with the owner of Redmond Town Center to evaluate potential improvements to the project. The goal of improvements is to re-energize the Center, ultimately creating a locally focused mixed-use Town Center that can serve the community for the next 50 years. Parts of the project are not working, being oriented inward and away from the energy of downtown. Façade challenges are the result of a vision in the 1990s which had been codified into the existing Comprehensive Plan. COVID-19 has had an impact as well. As a result of legacy 1990s Master Plan restrictions, energy at the center has decreased and the tenant base is shifting away from retail. Most original retail users as well as local food options have vacated the Center. Limited changes proposed to the Comprehensive Plan will remove the codified elements of the original Master Plan. GGLO Architects are being worked with on a more thorough vision of the repositioning of the Center that preserves existing tenant base and takes advantage of the central transit-oriented location. This is the first step in revitalizing the Center, removing the debilitating elements of the 1990s Master Plan. Mr. Woodruff asked that the Commission recommend approval for the Comprehensive Plan changes.

Mr. Collin Madden, 3625 Northwest 64th, Seattle, stated being the Manager of WBMT Redmond, the largest landowner in the Redmond Town Center zone within the big box

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store sections. The Madden family has owned the land since the 1970s and are excited to have control of the land for the first time in 50 years. The vision is to support an exciting urban environment and mixed-use area. Mr. Madden asked the Commission to consider increasing the 12-story or 120-foot height limit to 160-feet. Dense building helps create and support the vibrant urban neighborhoods that Redmond desires. Low rise buildings inspire bread box construction and Dexter Avenue in Seattle is an example. Large buildings attract great employers and tenants, housing opportunities, parking within structures considering the high-water table, open space, light, air, and better vertical use of dwindling available land for development. Any building over 80 feet is considered high-rise construction and adds approximately \$125 per square foot for concrete construction because of the Puget Sound seismic zone. Raising the limit to 160-feet will allow developers to amortize the incremental costs associated with the high-rise structural requirements. F.A.R. limitations create giant buildings and parking. There is an opportunity to avoid mistakes made by both Redmond and Seattle by considering a higher zone. Written comments have also been submitted.

- *Chairperson Nichols closed the Public Hearing for verbal testimony, but written testimony would remain open.*

Study Session

The first Issues Matrix item was from Commissioner Shefrin regarding massing studies. Massing studies were not conducted or requested as policy amendments because the amendments do not change the allowed height or setback regulations, and cleaning text will resolve. Commissioner Shefrin asked for clarification regarding the impact of changing height limits. Mr. Coil replied that a deeper discussion regarding height will occur when updating the Comprehensive Plan and Urban Centers. Ms. Pyle replied that massing studies for shadow and height will still be required as part of the entitlement. Redevelopment in the area will trigger a type of permit that requires a substantial review of the overall campus. These amendments are focused on removing some codification of a Master Plan which expired in 2005. Benefits from the previous Master Plan are being examined. Moving forward, more comprehensive studies are a part of the 2050 long range work and Phase Three re-write work. Commissioner Shefrin stated being okay to close the issue.

The next issue was from Commissioner Aparna regarding parking standards and requirements for the Town Center. These amendments do not affect parking standards in the Town Center, but applicants can seek parking reductions through existing regulations. Parking Standards in Urban Centers and near transit will be reviewed in the Periodic Review. Under regulations recommended by the Planning Commission in November 2021, additional height is allowed for structures with office uses if sufficient sub-terranean parking is not feasible and exceptional amenities are provided. Commissioner Captain asked, if parking standards will not be affected, that minimum parking standards will continue. Ms. Pyle replied that the amendments will not affect the current codified

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standards, but the city has been approving dramatic reductions during the last four years. There have been no projects built to minimum code standards in nearly five years, ratios between .63 and .8. What is required is 50% maximum of compact stalls. There has been flexibility in the deviation process. Commissioner Aparna asked for clarification in text regarding how to ensure that applicants are looking at a less suburban model which we have, to ensure that new designs will be mixed-use and different. Ms. Pyle replied that the changes are policy focused. Implementation happens at regulation. Within regulations, there are parameters to be able to review each project to be sure objectives are achieved, alignment with the Comprehensive Plan and a Master Plan process. The developer will need to demonstrate through data and analysis using the IT manuals and uses why the amount of parking proposed is needed. Parking needed near transit has reduced from 15 years ago. Commissioner Aparna asked if the amendments would be grandfathered into the current Comprehensive Plan or be held to Redmond 2050. Ms. Pyle replied both and explained the process. Chairperson Nichols stated that parking is underutilized and mismanaged throughout the day and there is no parking provided by Sound Transit at the Town Center station. Mr. Churchill replied with agreement. Commissioner Aparna stated that the issue could be closed.

The next issue was from Commissioners Captain and Aparna regarding what affect the proposal will have on height limits. The policy amendments do not change height limits or the ability to exceed except under certain circumstances. The policy amendments will allow additional height when accompanied by business components that advance business diversity, housing, or environmental sustainability goals. The current text allows for additional height with the term exceptional public amenities. In zoning code rewrite, if approved the maximum height limit with incentives would become 12-stories from eight. Ms. Pyle replied that the requirements are only for the purpose of bringing parking out of the aquifer and to not allow for additional density of F.A.R. In order to seek, the applicant will need to show a geotechnical report regarding the aquifer and what is actual necessary parking. Commissioner Aparna requested that the issue be left open for more detail, addressing with the comment of Mr. Madden during the Public Hearing and more information regarding incentives. Understanding the economics from an applicant perspective will be helpful. Ms. Pyle replied that code already allows for additional height, and additional height and incentives are what is before Council. The change before the Commission is defining what the exceptional benefit would look like. The comment of Mr. Madden is valid but pertains to a density increase which the policies are not seeking. Mr. Churchill replied that F.A.R. proposals are valid as far as accommodating growth in Redmond but that the amendment is regarding the annual docket, narrowly focused on removing restrictions that expired in 2005. Redmond 2050 will include Downtown and the ideal forum for building height and F.A.R. The comments from Mr. Madden can be considered at that time. Commissioner Aparna asked for clarification on height but not extended height, and Mr. Churchill replied yes. Commissioner Captain stated that applicants will discuss height in feet when the city refers to stories and asked how many feet are in a floor. Heights that restrict views from Town Center should be discussed. The view along Bear Creek Parkway in either direction to State Route 520 can be improved.

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Commissioner Captain stated being satisfied to close the issue. Commissioner Aparna stated that given the clarification from staff, the issue could be closed.

The next question from Commissioner Aparna was regarding sheltered pauses and requirements. Mr. Coil clarified that the amendments will not change any zoning or design standards in the Town Center zone, but permanent regulatory text was displayed regarding permitted encroachments on the pedestrian system. Commissioner Aparna stated that the issue could be closed.

The final issue was from Commissioner Aparna regarding changing Town Center from auto centric to more urban-focused. The property owners will be deciding to develop proposals and uses that comply with current zone and regulations. Commissioner Aparna stated that the issue could be closed.

Chairperson Nichols stated that the property has the potential to be a very important part of the city at the light rail station and property owners will need to be worked with to achieve appropriate and vibrant uses.

There were no further questions from Commissioners.

➤ *Chairperson Nichols closed the Public Hearing for written comments.*

Chairperson Nichols asked that Mr. Coil bring a draft report to the next presentation for approval. Mr. Coil stated that the Issues Matrix would be updated with replies from Ms. Pyle and Mr. Churchill and the comments of Mr. Madden.

6. Climate Vulnerability Assessment - Study Session: Staff will introduce the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and report on key findings and next steps.

Attachments: [Memo, Attachment A - Presentation](#)
Staff Contact: [Jenny Lybeck](#), Planning Manager 425-556-2121
[Becky Frey](#), Principal Planner 425-556-2750

Staff Presentation

Ms. Lybeck presented the project and next steps.

Ms. Frey commented on maps displayed.

Study Session

Commissioner Aparna asked if the report will inform materials and specifications in the next round, and if materials could be explored now while roads are being changed out. Ms. Lybeck asked if Commissioner Aparna referred to Public Works specifically and Commissioner Aparna replied Public Works and all infrastructure projects. Ms. Lybeck replied that analysis would be gone through with each team to understand what makes

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sense for them as well as collaborative regional opportunities; the response is more a nuance than a sweeping yes and all will move forward. The assessment allows staff to understand and prioritize next steps. Commissioner Aparna asked if other jurisdictions have had similar assessments in the event that Redmond pursues collaboration. Ms. Frey replied that Redmond has been contacted by other jurisdictions including Bellevue which are working on assessments and while Redmond is the first to this point, other jurisdictions are following quickly. Timing will be varied for different organizations. There will be requirements coming that all will need to follow.

Vice Chairperson East asked for an example from a Strategies slide, working with nature. Ms. Lybeck replied low-impact development and natural habitat restoration in example.

Commissioner Captain stated appreciating the amount of effort and information and being impressed with systems plans and strategies.

Commissioner Shefrin asked for clarification regarding the economic disparities of residents from a socio-economic standpoint. Ms. Lybeck replied that income considerations were an indicator but did not rise to the top as a prime indicator of vulnerability within Redmond specifically relative to age and living alone in example. Ms. Frey replied part of the adaptive capacity category, in example looking at unemployment and housing costs burden.

Chairperson Nichols asked about wildfires impacting Redmond. Ms. Lybeck replied that new leadership within the Fire Department is bringing a strong emphasis on the issue. Redmond does not have as great a risk of wildfires as, in example, Carnation or North Bend, but is considering emergency response efforts. Chairperson Nichols stated that Medford, Oregon was forced to evacuate part of the town during a recent wildfire. Ms. Frey replied that Emergency Management was consulted early in the process particularly regarding vulnerable populations, and the intent has been that outputs from the assessment would help Emergency Management update plans.

There were no further questions from Commissioners.

Ms. Lybeck stated that Geographic Information System (GIS) data has been built in such a way that it is being handed off to the city so updates can occur as available such as new climate vulnerability information and population demographics. The tool is intended to be ongoing and not a one-time tool.

➤ *Discussion only. No action taken.*

7. Redmond 2050 - Housing, Economic Vitality and Transportation Draft 1.0 Policies - Study Session

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Attachments: [Memo](#), [Attachment A - Housing Element Draft 1.0](#), [Attachment B - Housing Element Change Matrix Draft 1.0](#), [Attachment C - Economic Vitality Element Draft 1.0](#), [Attachment D - Economic Vitality Change Matrix Draft 1.0](#), [Attachment E - Transportation Element Draft 1.0](#), [Attachment F - Transportation Element Change Matrix Draft 1.0](#), [Attachment G - Presentation](#)

Staff Contact: [Jeff Churchill](#), Planning Manager 425-556-2492
[Glenn Coil](#), Senior Planner 425-556-2742
[Ian Lefcourte](#), Senior Planner 425-556-2438

Staff Presentation

Mr. Churchill presented the topic.

Study Session

Chairperson Nichols stated the topic would not be a deep discussion at this meeting. Commissioner Aparna asked if a wish list would be identified at this time and Chairperson Nichols replied first an approach for the process and then wish lists, examining each area, beginning with Housing Elements.

Housing Element. Vice Chairperson East asked to add to the discussion the term multi-plex, managing design standards to follow requests amidst the increase in density, and Home Repair Assistance for 80% Area Median Income (AMI).

Commissioner Aparna asked to discuss condominiums and affordability, and design standards in terms of passive and low-cost sustainable materials.

Commissioner Captain asked for a conversation on standards with the people who are building, and all involved.

Commissioner Shefrin had no comments.

Chairperson Nichols asked to discuss implications of HO-8, Housing Partnerships and Regional Collaboration implementation, and HO-7 - ADA Compliant Sidewalks.

Commissioner Captain stated that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) were discussed in the past, and a finding was that there is a lack of communication with the community. The discussion now should include how to improve communication with the community with less technical and legal terms.

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Economic Vitality Element. Commissioner Aparna asked to discuss retaining small businesses and incentivizing affordable commercial, attracting both indoor and outdoor businesses, and small groceries or mixed-use scenarios.

Commissioner Captain asked for clarification that Downtown has not been permitted to have chain businesses. Mr. Churchill replied that Bellevue Square tenants had clauses in leases prohibiting other outlets within a certain radius of that property, which precluded from locating in Downtown Redmond, but Mr. Churchill was not aware if this was still the situation. Commissioner Captain asked to discuss encouraging small business not only to come into Redmond but also to how the city can assist success.

Vice Chairperson East asked to understand how zoning and regulations can achieve the idea of Commissioner Captain, and EV-13 - what is included in an education piece.

Chairperson Nichols agreed with Commissioner Aparna in hoping to discuss EV-20, outdoor dining, EV-24, and encouraging home-based business.

Transportation Element. Vice Chairperson East asked to discuss TR-2 - zero deaths by 2030, TR-8 - wording, TR-9 in general, TR-19 - street classification system, and TR-22 in general.

Commissioner Aparna asked to understand the multi-modal approach, TR-39.

Commissioner Shefrin asked about wayfinding for other-abled and aesthetics of transportation systems as in designing for humans and safety.

Commissioner Captain asked to discuss TR-8 and TR-14 further.

Chairperson Nichols asked to discuss TR2, parking policies, TR-40 - defining Level of Service standard, policies regarding transportation demand management and related to Microsoft, TR-25 - freight plan and curb space management, and TR-15 in general.

There were no further comments from Commissioners.

➤ *Discussion only. No action taken.*

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8. Staff & Commissioner Updates

Mr. Lefcourte stated that Long-Range Planning is moving forward with interviews for a new Planner. The second round of interviews will occur tomorrow, Thursday, February 10, 2022.

Mr. Lefcourte stated that in terms of the extended agenda there will be many study sessions going forward. On February 23, 2022 the agenda includes the Redmond 2050 monthly briefing, Policy Draft Study Session and Redmond 2050 Growth Alternatives. In March 2022 there will be more Docket approvals and policies.

Chairperson Nichols stated that there are two positions available on the Planning Commission to apply for. The deadline is Sunday, February 13, 2022.

Vice Chairperson East asked if the long-term agendas have been updated on the website, and Chairperson Nichols replied yes. Vice Chairperson East and Chairperson Captain stated appreciation for having access to future agendas.

Chairperson Nichols stated that city Council had passed the Planning Commission recommendation on House Bill 1220 with minor changes, and that the Council was complimentary of the work of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Aparna stated appreciation of staff and the Commission in setting an example as a potential model for other cities regarding Permanent Housing.

Commissioner Captain stated that HB-1220 had been well-presented by Chairperson Nichols to the Council.

- *Discussion only. No action taken.*

9. Adjourn - 9:20pm

- *MOTION to adjourn* by Vice -Chair East. MOTION seconded by Commissioner Shefrin. *The MOTION passed unanimously.*

Minutes approved on:

April 13, 2022

Planning Commission Chair

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Sherrri Nichols
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