

Redmond Town Center Comp Plan Amendment Application

City of Redmond, WA
Applicant: Fairbourne Properties
Pre-Application Project No: LAND-2021-00156
Plan No.: LAND-2021-00255
Date: March 29, 2021

Description of Proposed Amendment

Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment

We are requesting minor amendments to the following Downtown Comprehensive Plan policies:

- Remove all references to the Town Center being controlled by a Master Plan as noted in paragraph 2 on page 14-18. Specific elements of the referenced masterplan have already been codified in the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code.
- *DT – 11 Ensure that building heights in the Downtown respect views of tree lines and adjacent hillsides and contribute to the development of an urban place that feels comfortable for pedestrians. Achieve this by limiting building heights to five and six stories in general and by allowing exceptions for additional height in a portion of the Town Center zone and elsewhere when accompanied by exceptional public amenities.*

Proposed Change: We ask the City to consider clarifications and changes to this section to reflect changing conditions downtown, particularly considering Sound Transit's plan for an adjacent high-capacity transit station, and to acknowledge the high groundwater in the area.

- *DT – 31 (Bullet 6) Maintain a minimum of 600,000 square feet of gross leasable area dedicated to retail uses;*

Proposed Change: Remove minimum retail square footage requirements.

- *DT – 32 Encourage development of residential uses by maintaining the maximum commercial building area for Town Center of 1,490,000 square feet without transfer development rights (TDRs) or 1,800,000 square feet with the use of TDRs.*

Proposed Change: Remove commercial development square footage restrictions.

Zoning Code Text Amendment

Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Amendments Questions

1. *What is your proposed amendment intended to accomplish include the desired change you are seeking?*

The suggested modifications to policy DT-11 is to encourage the redevelopment of the Town Center from an auto-centric suburban campus to a walkable high-quality mixed-use urban neighborhood. Further the modification could help to better align the policy with other comp plan policies such as UC-13, DT-6, DT-10, and DT-31.

The proposed modifications to DT-31 and DT-32 seek to remove specific elements that were adopted from the original Redmond Town Center Masterplan, adopted in 1995 and incorporated into both the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. These requirements inhibit successful operation of the existing improvements while and potential redevelopment by reducing the flexibility of uses to create a mixed-use neighborhood that is aligned with both current market demands and community preferences.

2. *Are you aware of any public support for your proposed amendment?*

We have not yet conducted any public outreach,

3. *How will your proposal support the goals contained in Redmond's Comprehensive Plan and provided on Page 5?*

- *To conserve agricultural lands and rural areas, and to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment.*

The proposal is intended to encourage the redevelopment of existing one and two-story buildings and surface parking lots with new pedestrian focused mixed use development. Encouraging redevelopment at the Town Center will support a vibrant concentration of uses Downtown while also reducing development pressures on current undeveloped agricultural lands and natural areas.

- *To retain and enhance Redmond's distinctive character and high quality of life, including an abundance of parks, open space, good schools and recreational facilities.*

The proposal will not impact existing parks, open space, and public facilities. New development is anticipated to enhance existing or add additional open spaces.

- *To emphasize choices in housing, transportation, stores and services.*

The proposal seeks to remove prescriptive use requirements to allow greater choices in housing, transportation, stores and services that better reflects current community and market desires.

- *To support vibrant concentrations of retail, office, service, residential, and recreational activity in Downtown and Overlake.*

The heart of the proposal is to provide needed flexibility to encourage greater concentrations of retail, office, services, and residential activity as part of a walkable transit-oriented development in the Downtown.

- *To maintain a strong and diverse economy, and to provide a business climate that retains and attracts locally owned companies as well as internationally recognized corporations.*

The proposal seeks to update past policies to address current business climate needs in order to attract and retain companies in Downtown Redmond. Specifically, the retail landscape has changed drastically since the adoption of the original masterplan. These changes necessitate the requested flexibility in order to reposition the site to maintain a strong and diverse economy in the future. Further, walkable density near transit will support a diverse tenant base, including a range of local options and international corporations.

- *To promote a variety of community gathering places and diverse cultural opportunities.*

Removal of the prescriptive elements of the current Comprehensive Plan, as proposed, allows for a greater diversity of uses and potential for repositioning of the center. Any such repositioning that may result from this proposal will enhance existing community gathering spaces, while new development will bring the needed resources and concentration of people to support additional community gathering spaces and cultural opportunities.

- *To provide convenient, safe and environmentally friendly transportation connections within Redmond, and between Redmond and other communities for people and goods.*

The proposal will support walkable transit-oriented development adjacent to the planned Sound Transit Station. Walkable density near transit and the replacement of surface parking lots will further promote more environmentally friendly transportation to replace the current auto centric site development pattern.

- *To remain a community of good neighbors, working together and with others in the region to implement a common vision for Redmond's future.*

The proposal will provide additional flexibility from the original Town Center Masterplan such that the community and property owners can work together to implement a common future vision.

4. *How will the proposal address the long-term interests and needs of the community as a whole?*

The proposed comprehensive plan revisions seek to remove past provisions that do not allow for repositioning or redevelopment of the existing center. The proposal will support redevelopment consistent with the goals of the Growth Management Act and the long-term interests and needs of the community, supporting concentrated urban growth in a sustainable and walkable mixed use T.O.D. environment that enhances the community character.

5. *How will the proposal support other applicable policies and provisions from Redmond's Comprehensive Plan?*

The proposal supports the following Comprehensive Plan Policies:

- UC – 13 Prepare station area plans in cooperation with Sound Transit and other stakeholders to guide updates to policies and implementation measures and to preserve opportunities for transit-oriented development. Create a dynamic and high-quality urban place that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle activity and minimizes motor vehicle parking facilities through consideration of design, land use density and mix, community facilities, and public and private investments.
- DT – 6 Encourage redevelopment of infill within the current Downtown boundaries.
- DT – 10 Evaluate and consider changes to development regulations in areas adjacent to future light rail stations to encourage transit-oriented development.
- DT – 31 (Bullet 11) Encourage the addition of residential development.

6. *Have there been any unanticipated consequences of the current policy that might necessitate a change to that policy.*

Policies that were adopted from the original masterplan limit the potential for redevelopment. It is understood that the square footage requirements from the original masterplan were intended to govern a single development and are challenging to enforce as the property now includes multiple property owners and stakeholders.

7. *If a change in allowed uses is proposed, discuss the need for the land use which would be allowed and whether the change would result in loss of capacity to accommodate other needed uses. Consider especially, whether the proposed change complies with the City policy HO-16, which would prohibit any rezone that reduces capacity for residential development without first approving another rezone that at least replaces the lot capacity elsewhere in the City.*

The proposal is not seeking a rezone or change in use that would reduce the potential for residential capacity. Rather, the proposal seeks the elimination of existing retail and commercial square footage requirements that could unintentionally inhibit residential development. The request seeks to increase the capacity for a wider range of potential site uses including additional residential and office capacity.