



MEMORANDUM

To: Redmond Planning Commission

From: Lauren Alpert, Senior Planner 425-556-2460
Ian Lefcourte, Senior Planner 425-556-2438
Odra Cárdenas, Planner 425-556-2439

Date: March 8, 2023

Subject: Complete Neighborhoods

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to introduce the topic of “complete neighborhoods” to the Planning Commission. Staff will seek initial input from Commissioners on different Complete Neighborhood options that could be pursued in Redmond.

BACKGROUND

The topic of improving access to daily goods and services outside Redmond’s centers has arisen at multiple Redmond 2050 Community Advisory Committee meetings and in other community engagement forums. Neighborhoods that have access to a variety of daily goods and services nearby are sometimes known as “10-minute neighborhoods” or “complete neighborhoods.” A “X-minute” neighborhood refers to the ability to access a variety of goods and services within a comfortable X-minute walk. A “complete” neighborhood means the same thing, but without a specific time-designation.

Land Use Priorities

City Hall

15670 NE 85th Street
PO Box 97010
Redmond, WA
98073-9710

Redmond 2050: Complete Neighborhoods

The first of two conversations staff would like to start with the Planning Commission is: what kinds of goods and services would be most valuable to have within walking distance? In other words, what are the uses that are essential to the “completeness” of a neighborhood?

Development Intensity and Form

Sometimes the idea of a complete neighborhood can be appealing but the execution of it can be controversial. Traffic, noise, and lighting impacts are often cited in opposing the introduction of commercial uses in mainly residential areas. These impacts can be mitigated by regulating the intensity and form of commercial uses. Regulating intensity means regulating the height and bulk of a use or cluster of uses. Regulating form means regulating the look of a commercial use or cluster of uses.

At the February 2023 Redmond 2050 Community Advisory Committee meeting, staff showed different kinds of use intensities and forms to understand what CAC members thought would be appropriate in Redmond. CAC members completed a questionnaire during or after that meeting and the results are in Attachment A.

Economics

Apart from zoning regulations that preclude small-scale commercial in residential neighborhoods, such enterprises are limited by economics. Economic barriers to successful small-scale commercial enterprise include:

- Capital start-up costs (e.g., building improvements and equipment)
- Limitations on size (e.g., zoning regulations and health department requirements)
- Lack of complementary businesses that create an attractive destination for customers
- Lack of customer base owing to low density surrounding development and low vehicle pass-by trips
- Competition from other brick-and-mortar or online businesses

Cities can reduce economic barriers by, for example:

- Allowing clusters of small-scale businesses
- Placing nodes of small-scale business opportunities near arterials or near higher-density residential uses
- Limiting costs associated with parking and building design

Of special importance is consideration of trade-offs that might be necessary to realize certain outcomes. For example, a certain amount of housing density may be necessary to support small-scale commercial enterprise in Redmond’s neighborhoods.

Redmond 2050: Complete Neighborhoods

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Redmond 2050 CAC Complete Neighborhoods Questionnaire Results
- B. Example Maps
- C. Presentation Slides

RESOURCES

- [Kirkland, WA 10-Minute Neighborhood webpage](#)
- [Strong Towns: 7 Rules for Creating 15-Minute Neighborhoods](#)