

# REDMOND 2050

## Community Involvement Summary

### First Quarter 2023

City staff engaged the community on several topics in the first quarter of 2023, including: Overlake regulations; light rail station accessibility; community design; complete neighborhoods; the Parks, Arts, Recreation, Culture, and Conservation (PARCC) Element; the PARCC Plan; the Economic Vitality Element; and the proposed Southeast Redmond industrial growth center.

## CONTENTS

<b>ENGAGEMENT METHODS</b> .....	1
<b>HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF INPUT</b> .....	2
<b>WHAT WE HEARD</b> .....	2
Overlake Regulations.....	2
Light Rail Station Accessibility.....	2
Community Design.....	4
Complete Neighborhoods.....	4
PARCC Element and PARCC Plan.....	5
Economic Vitality Element.....	5
Southeast Redmond Industrial Growth Center.....	5

## ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Redmond Planning staff connected with community members regarding the Redmond 2050 project through a variety of methods, including:

- Let's Connect online questionnaire and idea boards
- Southeast Redmond business breakfast
- LetsConnect survey for business owners
- Comment letters
- Stakeholder interviews
- Site visits and tours
- Redmond 2050 Community Advisory Committee meetings
- Redmond 2050 Technical Advisory Committee meetings
- Planning Commission meetings
- City Council meetings
- Office hours for code updates (multiple)

## HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF INPUT

Engagement during Q1 2023 spanned a wide variety of topics.

- Overlake regulatory reorganization and transitioning to transit-oriented development standards has support, with concerns about the incentive program and some comments on development standards.
- Community members identified sidewalk conditions, curb ramps, wayfinding, and construction detours as key issues to address in light rail station accessibility.
- There is support to create a Community Design element in the Comprehensive Plan that unifies policies for how Redmond looks and feels.
- There is support for creating opportunities for commercial and other non-residential uses in mainly residential areas to improve the variety of goods, services, and amenities that can be accessed without a car.
- The Parks, Arts, Recreation, Culture, and Conservation (PARCC) Plan and PARCC Element are headed in the right direction.
- The Economic Vitality Element is headed in the right direction.

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Overlake Regulations

From late November through mid-January staff conducted several events and activities to gain feedback on proposed code revisions. Several open houses, two large workshops, and a LetsConnect forum were used to collect feedback.

In general there was support for the direction the code revisions are heading on reorganizing the code and transitioning to urban formats and transit-oriented development. There was significant confusion on the incentive program and some comments on the development standards.

- [Full report of the testing phase comments and responses](#)

In addition, monthly code update office hours have been established to provide additional opportunities for stakeholders to hear updates and ask questions.

### Light Rail Station Accessibility

#### Walking and Rolling Audits

Two Walk and Roll Audits have been completed, one in the Overlake neighborhood and one in Downtown.

- The Downtown walk included the midblock trails and highlighted challenges in accessibility stemming from construction. Sidewalks are frequently blocked for safety during construction, but the location and size of blockage changes frequently with no warning, leaving individuals who are unable to step into the street to walk around blockages stuck attempting to find different routes. Another frustration highlighted Downtown is the size of curb cuts in new construction. While some, such as those at Cleveland Street and 161<sup>st</sup> Avenue, are large and accessible for pedestrians and mobility device users, others such as

those around the new Downtown station are narrow and only allow for a single user at a time. The community member expressed that these narrow curb cuts also force mobility device users to travel in the direction of the curb cut whereas larger and wider curb cuts allow for freedom of movement.

- The Overlake Walk and Roll audit included the temporary construction sidewalk along 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the 520 Bike Trail, both the Redmond Technology and Overlake Village light rail stations, and new developments and park along Turing St. The largest issue in this area is the discrepancy between the new development, with wide and accessible sidewalks, and the areas that have not been developed yet and contain various impediments to mobility. Community members expressed significant concerns about the state of the west sidewalk along 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue near the Overlake Village station, as it is not currently in a condition that would allow wheelchair users access; some damage on the east side of the road blocks the crosswalk that would connect people using mobility devices to the new sidewalks on the east side of the road.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Staff held interviews with the Hopelink Eastside Mobility Coordinator and a representative from Studio Pacifica. The Hopelink representative shared that many of the challenges they see their clients facing pertain to a lack of complete transportation networks, and a lack of wheelchair-accessible transportation modes, such as on-demand ride services. Studio Pacifica mainly focuses on the wayfinding signs on the Microsoft campus, with an emphasis on ensuring they are designed to be usable by community members of all abilities. Both groups emphasized that assisting community members with accessible route and wayfinding is a key element to ensuring equitable access to light rail.

### Focus Group

Staff held a hybrid format focus group in March attended by community members and representatives from the Disability Empowerment Center. Staff asked attendees to share places and designs within the city that currently assist with mobility, and places where they see challenges or opportunities for growth. The mid-block trails and Cleveland Street redesign were both highlighted as excellent locations currently due to their size, curb cuts, and safe infrastructure. A common barrier to transportation throughout the city is inaccessible sidewalks, either due to poor condition of the infrastructure or construction barriers. These sidewalk issues frequently require long re-routes or mid-street crossings without curb cuts to navigate. Another important topic brought up in the focus group pertains to wayfinding. Many participants in the focus group highlighted difficulties navigating Redmond by foot or wheel and noted that increased wayfinding signage would be beneficial. They also noted that using graphics or color coordination would also assist with individuals who may not be able to read English or may have poor eyesight, increasing the usability of signage.

- [Phase One Engagement Summary Report](#)

## Community Design

### Redmond 2050 Community Advisory Committee

During this quarter, the Redmond 2050 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) discussed the concept of “community design.” Staff introduced the topic to gauge CAC interest in December. After confirming interest, CAC members brought photos that illustrated good (or poor) community

design. Photos were diverse: they were local and global, small-town and big-city. Common themes included places for people to gather, public art, incorporating nature, and a mix of residential and non-residential uses.

- [CAC photos and discussion notes](#)

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission discussed this topic in January and supported the idea of creating a “community design” element in the Comprehensive Plan, emphasizing “design” over “character.” Commissioners saw the term “character” as sometimes useful but agreed that it can be vague and sometimes exclusionary. Commissioners favored using terms that are more specific than “character,” such as by focusing on specific design elements that can be easily understood.

### City Council

Councilmembers provided input on their priorities related to “community design.” Those priorities included unifying policies that impact how Redmond looks, feels, and sounds; environmental equity in Redmond’s centers, policies that underpin design standards, engaging community members, addressing the space between buildings that affect how the overall city fits together, and closing the gap between residential and other design standards.

## **Complete Neighborhoods**

### Redmond 2050 Community Advisory Committee

Community Advisory Committee members were invited to observe and evaluate public spaces outside of Redmond’s centers and identify what could make those places great. Locations that CAC members evaluated included neighborhood and community parks, townhome areas, open space adjacent to an arterial, and local streets. Examples of what could make those places great included opportunities for food, art and cultural activities, public art, small-scale goods and services, seating areas, shelter, and attractive landscaping.

- [CAC Complete Neighborhoods Questionnaire results](#)

### Planning Commission

Commissioners discussed opportunities to make mainly residential neighborhoods in Redmond more complete by adding goods, services, and other amenities that could be walkable for more people. Examples included opportunities for food, convenience stores, specialty stores, entertainment spaces, and other places where people could gather. Restrooms, seating spaces, public art, shelter from the elements, and safe and comfortable access walking and biking were mentioned as desirable amenities.

## PARCC Element and PARCC Plan

### Planning Commission

Commissioners had some questions about how the PARCC Plan addresses equity in level of service standards. There were also questions and comments about how capital improvements are identified and prioritized.

## Economic Vitality Element

### Planning Commission

Commissioners discussed the appropriateness of technology-related policies in the Economic Vitality Element. Commissioners also discussed the distinction of resident-serving and neighborhood-based businesses and encouraged clarity.

## Southeast Redmond Industrial Growth Center

Southeast Redmond Business Breakfast was on March 28 at Pomegranate Bistro (18005 NE 68<sup>th</sup> Street) and was attended by about 35 local business owners, workers, and interested parties. The feedback received included the importance of affordable housing, affordable rental space for quick lunch spots and restaurants, environmental concerns, and encouragement of green businesses.

An Idea Board on Redmond 2050's Let's Connect page so far includes the following ideas: invest in infrastructure, provide tax incentives, and training to workers to attract more advanced and manufacturing and technology jobs.