

Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan Update

To:	Planning Commission
From:	Technical Committee
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Date:	May 12, 2004
DGA Number:	L040126 and L040127
Recommended Action:	Recommend to the City Council that the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan be adopted.
Summary of the Proposed Amendment:	<p>The Grass Lawn Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has worked with their neighbors and City staff to develop a neighborhood vision and policy recommendations for the first neighborhood plan for the Grass Lawn area. The Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan will help guide new development as it occurs in the neighborhood.</p> <p>The CAC developed its own twenty year vision for the Grass Lawn neighborhood. In the year 2020, the Grass Lawn neighborhood will continue to reflect the attractive, green nature of its namesake park, provide a broad mix of housing types and travel choices, and convenience service and retail businesses will be located within a short walking distance. Key components of the neighborhood vision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing units with a variety of sizes and housing types that blend in well with the existing neighborhood, including higher densities near access to transit. • Protection of woodland views and forested slopes. • Neighborhood commercial zones that include two- and three-story buildings with small retail businesses on the ground floor and offices, professional and technical services on the upper floors. • A variety of travel choices available to those who live or work in the neighborhood. Safe pedestrian crossings will be provided on all busy streets. Attractive and functional streetscapes for all travel modes and include street trees and separated sidewalks, where possible.

- A system of parks, trails, and pathways enhance connections throughout the neighborhood and to other destinations in the City.
- Grass Lawn Park is a community gathering place that includes a small concession stand, performing arts facilities, and other amenities to serve the neighborhood.
- West Lake Sammamish Parkway, 140th, 148th, and 132nd Avenues NE remain the main arterials for the neighborhood.

As this is the first plan to be prepared for the Grass Lawn neighborhood, nearly all of the text and policies contained in the proposed Neighborhood Plan are new. Although unique to Grass Lawn, the recommended goals and policies in the Neighborhood Plan are consistent with the City's overall vision for growth and development. The major recommendations for new policies are as follows:

- **Formation of a neighborhood association to continue the work begun by citizens through the neighborhood plan update.** Citizens in the neighborhood indicated support for continuing to improve communication between the neighborhood and the City, and for working together on community issues. The plan recommends annual meetings to evaluate implementation of the neighborhood plan, identify any needed changes, and discuss projects or opportunities of concern with the neighborhood. One of the first tasks for a neighborhood association as recommended by the CAC would be to conduct a survey and contest among residents regarding the name of the neighborhood and have identification signs installed at key entry locations within the neighborhood.
- **Improve Grass Lawn Park as a community gathering place and include more amenities for neighborhood residents.** Being centrally located in the neighborhood, Grass Lawn Park provides a strong focal point that serves as both a community and neighborhood park. In order to define the park as a community gathering place, the CAC is interested in working with the Parks Board to promote more neighborhood activities at Grass Lawn Park. Improvements such as food concessions, tables and benches for playing games, and an outdoor performance platform are also desired by the neighborhood.
- **Promote improved access and connections to neighborhood parks.** The CAC made a number of recommendations to promote connections and improve access within the neighborhood. These include:
 - Better and more non-motorized connections to Grass Lawn Park, especially from the north.
 - A pedestrian overcrossing on 148th Avenue NE between NE 80th Street and Old Redmond Road.

○ Explore connecting the future local resource park site on NE 80th Street and Redmond Way (Scott's Pond) with the undeveloped right of way with the undeveloped street right of way adjacent to NE 77th Street.

- **Provide a variety of housing options for residents wanting to stay or move into the neighborhood.** The CAC felt it was in the best interest of the neighborhood to provide a variety of housing options for people in the community. Examples included individuals who live in Redmond but must move due to changes in family or other circumstances, and those who work here but may not earn enough money to live here. The committee agreed that varying home sizes and styles, such as cottages and duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes that are design to look like single family homes can provide affordable options that blend well with the existing neighborhood character.
- **Promote affordable housing while ensuring that new homes are designed to be similar in appearance to existing and market rate homes in the neighborhood.** Members of the CAC expressed concern that rising home costs will make it unlikely that many types of households, such as those with one wage earner, seniors, day care workers and technicians, will be unable to afford to live within the neighborhood. The CAC has recommended that a minimum of 10% of all new housing units (in developments that have 10 units or more) be affordable to households earning 80% or less of the King County Median Income. The CAC also recommended that a broad assortment of incentives, bonuses, and public funding be utilized to create and preserve affordable housing options in the Grass Lawn neighborhood.
- **Require new housing to be compatible with the existing residential character.** Neighborhood residents want to ensure that new housing developments provide variety and visual interest that is compatible and blends with the neighborhood. New residential developments will be required to include a variety of home designs and to vary sizes, types, and site design features such as setbacks or lot sizes to maintain variety and visual interest, avoid repetitive style and to avoid a bulky and massive appearance. Designs shall also emphasize living space, and not garages, as the dominant feature of the street elevation.
- **Encourage small scale stores and services within appropriate areas of the neighborhood to meet the daily or weekly service needs of neighborhood residents and reduce vehicle trips.** Although many retail and service needs of the Grass Lawn neighborhood can be met in both downtown Redmond and Kirkland, there are few options within close walking distance to most of the neighborhood. The CAC recommended that small scale convenience retail and service businesses, such as banking, coffee shops, restaurants, and video stores be permitted on 148th Avenue NE, north of the park. Businesses allowed

	<p>should be those that primarily serve the daily or weekly needs of neighborhood residents, encourage walking or bicycling, and are compatible with nearby uses. The hours of operation would be limited, and uses such as supermarkets, gas stations, hotels and motels would be prohibited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian safety and non-motorized connections between neighborhood housing developments, Grass Lawn Park, and Downtown Redmond. Residents of the Grass Lawn neighborhood expressed strong interest in improving pedestrian safety and increasing opportunities to walk to neighborhood destinations. The CAC developed a list of recommended actions that are of priority in the neighborhood to improve pedestrian mobility and safety. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Closure of NE 80th Street at Redmond Way ○ Pedestrian crossings along Redmond Way and 148th Avenue NE, particularly where there are long distances between existing and planned signalized intersections. ○ Complete pedestrian street lighting improvements on Redmond Way. ○ Install sidewalks based on citywide criteria and neighborhood priorities. ○ Install bus shelters, particularly at Old Redmond Road and 140th Avenue NE. ○ Provide sidewalks that are separated from traffic along both sides of Redmond Way. ○ Support the City of Kirkland’s plan to provide sidewalks along the east side of 132nd Avenue NE.
<p>Reasons the Proposal Should be Adopted:</p>	<p>The proposed neighborhood plan update should be adopted for the following reasons:</p> <p>Comprehensive Strategy. The plan provides a comprehensive approach and solid framework for accommodating additional residential and business development in the neighborhood while preserving key characteristics of the neighborhood.</p> <p>Consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policies. The proposed Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the neighborhood policies in the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses specific neighborhood quality of life issues • Implemented public involvement activities by promoting input and participation from neighborhood residents, businesses, and property owners. • Identifies issues and opportunities in the neighborhood as identified by the people who live and work there. • Defines a future vision for the neighborhood. • Addresses land use issues and promotes variety and affordability in housing choices. • Prioritizes neighborhood transportation and pedestrian oriented improvements, and promotes linkages to community resources.

- Proposes to maintain and protect natural features and sensitive areas.
- Addresses neighborhood character, parks, and open space needs.

Effective at achieving both neighborhood and citywide goals. The Plan has an innovative and effective approach toward accomplishing a number of citywide goals for the neighborhood and community development, while preserving some of the key characteristics of the neighborhood. Activities such as promoting a mix of housing styles, sizes, and affordability levels, emphasizing Grass Lawn Park as a community focal point, improving pedestrian connections and safety, maintaining natural environmental features, and enhancing public involvement programs all work to achieve various Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

Comprehensive Plan Policy HO-5 states that a mix of housing types allowed by the City should be designed to meet Redmond's affordability targets for new development. The City's Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies establish a target that 41% of all new housing will be affordable to households earning 80% or less of the King County Median Income. The requirement that 10% of all new housing in the Grass Lawn neighborhood will be affordable to households meeting this criterion will help the City meet this goal. In addition, encouraging a mix of smaller cottages and duplex, triplex, and fourplex structures will provide alternative housing styles to meet a variety of household sizes and needs.

Maintains neighborhood character and shapes new development. The plan will help ensure that new residential development will blend with and help maintain the existing neighborhood character. The Plan helps promote a sense of community and connectivity, variety in lot sizes and housing styles, proximity and access to open space and recreational opportunities, and describes neighborhood priorities with respect to capital improvements.

Improvements to infrastructure. The plan will help guide investments in services to meet priority needs as defined by those who live and work in the neighborhood. Priority improvements include:

- Enhanced pedestrian connections between housing developments and Grass Lawn Park as well as other community destinations
- Improved street lighting
- Sidewalks on major arterials that are separated from traffic by planting strips and landscaping
- Bus shelters at neighborhood bus stops
- Coordination with the City of Kirkland for improvements to 132nd Avenue NE.

Connecting the community. The plan promotes continued communication and connection between the neighborhood and the City of Redmond.

I. APPLICANT PROPOSAL

A. Applicant

The City of Redmond and Grass Lawn Neighborhood Citizens Advisory Committee

B. Background and Reason for Proposal

Each neighborhood in the City of Redmond has its own unique sense of place that sets it apart from the other neighborhoods and makes it a special place to live. The neighborhood planning process helps define the distinctiveness of the neighborhood and describes the characteristics that are of value to the community that should be enhanced or preserved as the plan is implemented. Until now, the Grass Lawn neighborhood has never had a neighborhood plan prepared.

The Grass Lawn Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed in April 2003, following a neighborhood services fair that was widely attended. The CAC consisted of seven community volunteers who met up to 4 times a month for six months to identify concerns and evaluate opportunities to respond to community needs.

At the neighborhood services fair, future members of the CAC heard from their neighbors about issues that were important to them: More affordable housing choices and variety in home sizes and styles, improved access to Grass Lawn Park, pedestrian connections throughout the neighborhood, sidewalks, streetlights, and a need for goods and services located within comfortable walking distances to residential developments. During their six month tenure, the CAC worked with City staff from every department and relied on information gathered at the neighborhood services fair, comments from interested parties who attended their weekly meetings, and their own experiences within the neighborhood to develop a program to address these concerns. The CAC also met with representatives from parks, fire, police, transportation, engineering, and planning to learn more about how the City functions and the feasibility of options under consideration. Lastly, each of the members of the CAC talked with their neighbors to seek input on the activities of the CAC and integrated comments from these conversations into their plan recommendations.

At the end of the six month planning process, the CAC forwarded its recommendations for the neighborhood plan to all of the property owners in Grass Lawn and solicited comments in return. (A neighborhood open house had been scheduled, but was cancelled due to severe weather). In general, comments were in favor of the recommendations of the CAC, although opinions were mixed on most subject areas.

In April 2004, the chairperson of the CAC presented an overview of the proposed plan update during a study session with the Planning Commission.

II. RECOMMENDATION

The Technical Committee recommends amending the Neighborhoods Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the recommendations of the Grass Lawn Citizens Advisory Committee as shown in the attached Exhibit A, with minor amendments as recommended by the Technical Committee also shown in Exhibit A. Being the first neighborhood plan prepared for the Grass Lawn neighborhood, nearly all the language in the proposed amendment is new to the Neighborhoods Chapter.

III. ALTERNATIVES

1. **Update the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan.** The proposed updates are intended to:
 - Reflect the preferred character and values expressed by people attending the focus groups, workshop, and those who participated on the Citizens Advisory Committee.
 - Reflect issues and identify opportunities facing the City.
 - Establish clear goals for preserving neighborhood character, guide new development in the Grass Lawn neighborhood, and provide for the needs of the people who live and work in Grass Lawn.
 - Be consistent with the goals and policies of the Growth Management Act, Countywide Planning Policies, and City of Redmond Comprehensive Plan.
2. **Do not update the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan.** If the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan is not updated, development may still occur in the neighborhood, but it may not reflect the goals and desires of the neighborhood or the City, and it may not be consistent with the neighborhood values for community, connections, and character.

IV. SUPPORTING ANALYSIS: FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan Update began with a series of small focus group discussions with people who live and work in Grass Lawn, followed by a neighborhood-wide City services fair and workshop that was widely attended. At each of these events, citizens identified their goals for what should be preserved in the neighborhood, what needed improvement, and what issues and neighborhood values should be kept in mind during the update.

After the City services fair and workshop, a 7-member committee, consisting of people who live, work, and own property in Grass Lawn, was appointed to represent the neighborhood in working with the City to update the plan. This group, known as the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met regularly with City staff from April through November 2003 to formulate their plan recommendations.

The CAC received input from residents in the area throughout the planning period, and included in their consideration the comments received during the focus group meetings and workshop. Activities of the CAC included reviewing background information, meeting with staff representatives from various City departments, identifying issues to address, considering alternative responses, and recommending updated policies and regulations.

At the conclusion of the CAC work on the plan, a newsletter was mailed to the neighborhood to seek input on the Committee's preliminary plan recommendations. After seeking input from the community, the City's Technical Committee reviewed the preliminary recommendations, and has suggested minor amendments that are included in the CAC recommendations.

An abbreviated postcard form of the notice of the Public Hearing on the CAC recommendations was mailed to all property owners in the Grass Lawn Neighborhood. Copies of the notice were also published in the Seattle Times and were mailed to interested parties who had provided written comments on the CAC recommendations. Copies of the recommendation were also posted on the City's website.

B. COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AMENDMENTS

The following is an analysis of how the proposed Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan update complies with the Comprehensive Plan and requirements for amendments: Redmond Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-142 sets out the following Comprehensive Plan amendment criteria:

- 1. Consistency with the Growth Management Act (GMA), Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development Procedural Criteria, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.** The GMA, CTED Procedural Criteria, and Countywide Planning Policies all promote public involvement, a mix of housing styles, sizes, and affordability levels to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community, and infrastructure to help promote alternative modes of transportation, such as pedestrian improvements. The proposed policies recommended by the CAC for the Grass Lawn neighborhood all respond to these criteria.

2. **Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan Policies and the designation criteria.** The proposed Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan policies to promote a diversity of housing styles and sizes and require a portion of all new housing to be affordable to households earning 80% or less of the King County Median Income is consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies for housing. The Neighborhood Plan also promotes Comprehensive Plan policies for connectivity by recommending pedestrian oriented improvements such as sidewalks and street lighting. Lastly, the proposed establishment of a neighborhood association will help implement City goals to encourage public participation. Therefore, the proposed amendments to the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies and designation criteria.
3. **The capability of the land including the prevalence of sensitive areas.** The Grass Lawn CAC evaluated the capability of vacant land to accommodate the proposed recommendations and the prevalence of sensitive areas in considering their recommendations. The land is capable of accommodating the proposed policies for housing and neighborhood commercial activities, and the twenty-year vision for the Grass Lawn neighborhood promotes preservation of existing slopes and sensitive areas.
4. **Consistency with the preferred growth and development pattern in Section B of the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.** The Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan will help promote housing construction at densities higher than 4 units per acre, seeks to improve neighborhood connections and pedestrian activity, establishes Grass Lawn Park as a focal point for the community, and helps promote neighborhood related services and businesses in close proximity to residential areas. Therefore, the proposed amendments to the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan are consistent with and will help implement the preferred growth and development pattern in Section B of the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.
5. **The capacity of the public facilities and whether public facilities and services can be provided cost-effectively at the intensity allowed by the designation.** In considering the issues affecting their neighborhood, the Grass Lawn CAC met with representatives from the Parks, Police, Fire and Public Works Departments of the City to ensure that there is adequate capacity of the public facilities and services to accommodate updates to the Neighborhood Plan. The proposed amendments are consistent with the land use patterns for the City, and there is adequate capacity of public facilities and services to accommodate the policies and activities recommended through the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan.

6. **Whether the allowed uses are compatible with the nearby uses.** The neighborhood planning process helps identify where there are conflicting uses and seeks remedies to those conflicts. Within the Grass Lawn neighborhood, the CAC recommended policies to ensure that new housing developments include a mix of housing styles and sizes to ensure that they fit well within the existing neighborhood. In addition, recommended policies will help promote connectivity within the neighborhood. Therefore, policies and uses recommended in the proposed Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan are compatible with nearby uses.
7. **If the purpose of the amendment is to change the allowed use in an area, the need for the land uses that would be allowed by the Comprehensive Plan amendment and whether the amendment would result in the loss of the capacity to meet other needed land uses, especially whether the proposed amendment complies with the policy on a no-net loss of housing capacity.** There is no change in land use proposed. In addition, the proposed policies to allow cottages, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes within single family neighborhoods may help increase the number of housing units that may otherwise have been built in the Grass Lawn neighborhood.
8. **For issues that have been considered within the last four annual updates or comprehensive land use plan amendments, whether there has been a change in circumstances that makes the proposed plan designation or policy change appropriate or whether the amendment is needed to remedy a mistake.** This criterion is not applicable. This is the first update to the Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan that has been prepared.

V. AUTHORITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL, PUBLIC, AND AGENCY REVIEW

- A. **Subject Matter Jurisdiction:**

The Redmond Planning Commission and the Redmond City Council have subject matter jurisdiction to hear and decide whether to adopt the proposed Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan Update.
- B. **Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)**

A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) and SEPA Checklist was issued for this non-project action.
- C. **Sixty Day State Agency Review:**

State agencies were sent an initial 60-day notice of Redmond's proposed major Comprehensive Plan updates, including proposed updates to the neighborhoods chapter of the Comprehensive Plan in December 2002, and will be sent the specific proposed policy updates following the public hearing.

Public Involvement:

The public was extensively involved in community input. The Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan Update began with a series of small focus group discussions with people who live and work in Grass Lawn, followed by a neighborhood-wide City services fair and workshop that was widely attended. After the City services fair and workshop, a 7-member committee, consisting of people who live, work, and own property in Grass Lawn, was appointed to represent the neighborhood in working with the City to update the plan. This group, known as the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met regularly with City staff from April through November 2003 to formulate their plan recommendations. Throughout the process, the CAC received input from residents in the area, and included in their consideration the comments received during the focus group meetings and workshop. At the conclusion of the CAC work on the plan, a newsletter was mailed to the neighborhood to seek input on the Committee's preliminary plan recommendations. After seeking input from the community, the City's Technical Committee reviewed the preliminary recommendations, and has suggested minor amendments that are included in the CAC recommendations.

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D. Appeals:

RCDG 20F.30.55 identifies a Comprehensive Plan amendment as a Type VI permit. Final action is held by the City Council. The action of the City Council on a Type VI proposal may be appealed by filing a petition with the Growth Management Hearings Board, pursuant to the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

VI. LIST OF EXHIBITS

- EXHIBIT A: Proposed Grass Lawn Neighborhood Plan Policies**
- EXHIBIT B: SEPA Checklist**
- EXHIBIT C: Public Comments**

Roberta Lewandowski, Planning Director

Date

Dave Rhodes, Public Works Director

Date