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May 17, 2013

Via Email: jchurchill@redmond.gov

Jeff Churchill City of Redmond Planning Department

Re: Southeast Redmond Neighborhood Plan Update

Dear Mr. Churchill & Members of the Citizen Advisory Committee:

We represent parties that have interests in the Southeast Redmond Neighborhood. On behalf of these parties, please accept these comments regarding the Southeast Redmond Neighborhood Plan Update.

One of the questions posed during an early advisory meeting was "How does the neighborhood need to change over the next 20 years to serve existing needs and to accommodate expected growth in jobs and population?" We believe that this question is aimed at developing a balance between accommodating growth while maintaining the character of the existing neighborhood. One answer to this question is to identify underutilized areas of Southeast Redmond that could accommodate more intensive development without compromising the neighborhood goals and policies. We believe the Gateway Design District ("GDD") is an example of such an area two primary reasons: (1) it is already served by major transportation corridors; and (2) it is surrounded by zones that allow more intensive development.

The GDD is generally bounded and served by major transportation corridors. Union Hill Road abuts the GDD to the north, 178th Place NE and 180th Ave NE to the east, Redmond Way to the south, and State Route 520 to the west. Additionally, the GDD is already sandwiched between two more intensive zones: Manufacturing Park to the west, Business Park to the east, and General Commercial to the south. All of these zones permit heights and floor area ratios ("FAR") greater than the GDD. For instance, the FAR in these neighboring zones is 1.0, 2.0, and 1.6 respectively. Yet, the FAR for the GDD zone is only 0.6. Likewise, the based heights in the adjoining zones range from 4-5 stories, but the base height in the GDD zone is only three stories. Adopting new GDD policies that encourage greater height and FAR that is similar to that in adjoining

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zones will accommodate expected growth in jobs and population with minimal impact on the overall character of the neighborhood.

Likewise, adopting new policies or updating existing policies to achieve greater intensity in the GDD has a number of advantages for the neighborhood. First, it ensures that the major transportation corridors serving this neighborhood are fully utilized to accommodate new growth. This will minimizes transportation impacts on less-developed corridors. Second, it focuses growth within the confines of existing commercial areas and will help relieve pressure of expanding existing non-residential districts beyond their current boundaries. Finally, it does not require a major overhaul of other planning polices for the GDD zone. This proposal does not require changes to the fundamental vision for the GDD and can actually help further that vision.

In sum, creating policies in the GDD to encourage greater height and FAR is a small, but significant step towards achieving the balance between accommodating growth while maintaining the character of the larger neighborhood.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these comments. We would be happy to discuss this issue with you further.

Sincerely,

John T. Cooke

Cc: Client