

# REDMOND DIGITAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SUITE

APA/PAW AWARD SUBMITTAL, MAY 2013





May 31, 2013

APA/PAW Awards Committee  
Washington APA Office  
603 Stewart Street, Suite 610  
Seattle, WA 98101

To Kelly Larimer, George Streirer, and the APA/PAW Awards Committee:

Please find enclosed a complete 2013 APA/PAW Planning Awards nomination packet for Redmond's *Digital Planning and Development Suite* in the *Implementation* category.

We set out to leverage technology to provide unprecedented levels of transparency and accessibility in the planning and permit review process. We are very pleased with the results and believe they can serve as a model to communities around the state.

This balance of this nomination packet includes:

- Project summary
- Explanation of why the project is unique, significant, or a successful contribution to planning
- Project implementation and public/private involvement
- Project description
- Demonstration of compliance with review criteria
- Award plaque and certificate information
- Endorsement letters
- Application fee

For questions or more information please contact:

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PO Box 97010 MS 4SPL                     425-556-4242 (fax)  
Redmond, WA 98073-9710

Sincerely,

Robert G. Odle, Planning and Community Development Director  
City of Redmond  
PO Box 97010 MS 4SPL  
Redmond, WA 98073-9710

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## DIGITAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SUITE PROJECT SUMMARY

### SCOPE

Digital Comprehensive Plan, e-Zoning Code and Property Viewer, and e-Review / e-Track.

### TIMING

Work began in 2009 and culminated in 2012 (E-Track was substantially complete by December 2012 and debuted January 2013).

### PARTICIPANTS

Interdepartmental staff team, Code Rewrite Commission, Planning Commission, Mayor, City Council, and hundreds of community participants.

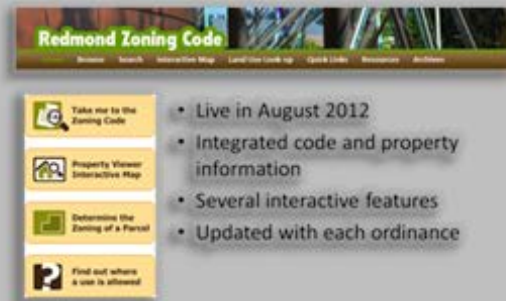
## EXPLANATION OF WHY THE PROJECT IS UNIQUE, SIGNIFICANT, OR A SUCCESSFUL CONTRIBUTION TO PLANNING

Redmond's *Digital Planning and Development Suite* is a major step forward in moving to an all-digital planning and permit review system. The shift to web-based services provides better service both to our permit customers and anyone with an interest in the City's future plans. For example, the GIS Property Viewer can answer questions like, "Where is a restaurant allowed?" or "Is there a zoning overlay on my property, and what does it mean?" or even "What commercial properties are for sale or lease?" This capability allows staff to devote limited resources to more complex questions that require person-to-person communication.

Importantly, what Redmond has done is replicable in communities across the state. For example, many communities already have their comprehensive plans and zoning codes online, but are not taking advantage



**Digital Comprehensive Plan**



**E-Code & Property Viewer**



**E-Review / E-Track**

**Watch nomination video:**

[www.redmond.gov/DigitalSuite](http://www.redmond.gov/DigitalSuite)

of interactive features that are relatively easy to implement. Other communities have an interactive GIS system and an online code, but they remain separate, stand-alone products. With the *Digital Planning and Development Suite*, Redmond has utilized 21<sup>st</sup> century tools to create an integrated set of commonly-used planning services in a user-friendly format.

Planning and Information Services staff led the development of the online tools, with consultant assistance in deploying the e-Zoning Code and e-Track permit review system.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE INVOLVEMENT

The *Digital Planning and Development Suite* debuted in phases, with the final phase, e-Track, substantially complete by the end of 2012 and deploying the first week of January 2013.

With the advent of these tools, Redmond's planning and permit review activities are now mostly electronic. The City no longer publishes a printed Zoning Code, and offers limited copies of a printed Comprehensive Plan. Similarly, in most cases the City only accepts electronic plans for permit applications. Although the tools are in daily use, we continue to make improvements. For example, we are integrating building history and certificate of occupancy information into the Property Viewer,

allowing prospective tenants to determine the suitability of a building without visiting City Hall.

The City engaged a broad range of stakeholders over the course of developing the *Digital Suite*. Redmond undertook a GMA-required Comprehensive Plan update in 2010-11. That process included multiple community-wide meetings, such as the *Livable Redmond* event, as well as a series of hearings with the Planning Commission (see also Mr. Gregory's endorsement letter). Once the content was adopted, Planning staff



Invitation to Livable Redmond

researched various online platforms before selecting Flipping Book to host the digital Comprehensive Plan.

A concurrent Zoning Code rewrite process focused on making Redmond's development regulations easier for everyone to understand and use. The process was led by a special purpose commission comprising residents, business and development interests, and planning commissioners. Early in the rewrite process, stakeholders encouraged staff to consider taking online integration to the next level. Throughout the process staff hosted topic-based open houses while the Commission held public hearings.



Redmond focused involvement in e-Track, the permit review system, on the development community since it is the principal user of the system. Prior to going live the City hosted information and training sessions to smooth the transition between the old and new systems.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Redmond's *Digital Planning and Development Suite* offers an unprecedented accessibility and transparency in planning and permit review. The suite consists of three integrated components: Redmond's digital Comprehensive Plan; E-Zoning Code and Property Viewer; and E-Review and E-Track, the City's new online permit portal. Through these tools the digital suite addresses the full spectrum of urban development, from vision and planning, to permit and final occupancy. More information about each tool is provided below.

### 1) REDMOND'S DIGITAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Updated in 2011, Redmond's digital Comprehensive Plan brings a 21<sup>st</sup> Century look and feel. Users can interact with it more effectively, and move between it and other online information more intuitively through enhanced navigation, search, and links. These features are also available when viewing the document on smart phones and tablets. Also, Zoning Code citations are linked to the new E-Zoning Code, which is the second component of the digital suite described below.

### 2) E-ZONING CODE AND PROPERTY VIEWER

Also fully updated in 2011, Redmond's Zoning Code is now exclusively in digital format, with enhanced navigation and search tools. The integrated property viewer not only provides access to standard map information, it allows users to look up land use and development regulations, map the City by land use type, and view commercial property listings.



*Property Viewer displaying property for lease*

### 3) E-REVIEW AND E-TRACK

This web portal is a one-stop-shop to submit, manage, and track development applications. Developers and interested parties can access permit information, request inspections, view review status, and receive automated updates. Future enhancements will include online payment and business license management.

Each tool in the digital suite plays a key role in continued planning and development in the community. Through this integrated package, the City of Redmond offers an unprecedented level of accessibility and transparency in local government services.

## DEMONSTRATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH REVIEW CRITERIA

### OUTSTANDING APPLICATION OF PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The development and deployment of the *Digital Planning and Development Suite* highlights three important planning principles:

- Robust public participation
- Convenient access to public information
- Transparency of the development review process

For each tool the City engaged in both broadcast and targeted outreach to ensure a thorough airing of views and a better end product. Now that it is operational, the suite of tools provides exceptional access to a variety of planning and permit review information, as well as improved transparency both for applicants and interested parties.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY VALUES

As expressed in the community involvement portion of Redmond's Comprehensive Plan, Redmond values a development process that is transparent, timely, and predictable. The *Digital Planning and Development Suite* enables developers and interested citizens alike to access more information in an easy manner, improving transparency, timeliness, and predictability for all parties. Redmond also values its green character. Conducting more business online reduces required vehicle trips to City Hall.

### CONTRIBUTION TO SPECIFIC PLANNING TECHNOLOGIES

As described throughout this nomination, the *Digital Planning and Development Suite* is a direct response to this criterion, and puts Redmond on the leading edge of implementing interactive web-based tools for planning and permit review.

### FURTHERANCE OF GMA

These tools advance GMA goals related to economic development, permits, and the environment. The tools make it easier for businesses that want to locate in Redmond to find a suitable location and apply for the necessary permits. The tools also help permits to be processed in a timely and transparent manner, which is important both for applicants and other interested parties. The use of these web-based tools reduces the need for applicants and others to visit City Hall, saving vehicle trips and hence air emissions.

## SUITABILITY OF THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OR CONTEXT

Redmond is a community that embraces innovation, especially in computer technology. It is also a community where it was increasingly clear that our planning and permit review systems did not offer the level of transparency and predictability expected by the community. Access to all kinds of information has become easier in recent years, and our customers expect local government to keep up. These tools help us do that.

## INNOVATIVE AND/OR CREATIVE SOLUTION OR PROJECT, AND DEMONSTRATION OF APPLICABILITY TO OTHER PROJECTS

Several features of the *Digital Planning and Development Suite* are, to the best of our knowledge, entirely new for municipal government. For example, we have not found another community that embeds commercial property listings in its in-house GIS system, or that provides hyperlinks directly from GIS to specific code sections. We have also published a Comprehensive Plan that is searchable, and contains a functional table of contents and hyperlinks, and can be used on all major models of mobile devices and smart phones. We hope that demonstrating these features and publicizing them will lead others to adopt them. As described earlier, we believe that portions of or all of this suite of tools can be replicated in communities across the state.

## DIFFICULTY OF THE PROBLEM OR ISSUE ADDRESSED, OVERCOMING PROJECT OBSTACLES

Perhaps the biggest obstacle in developing the *Digital Planning and Development Suite* was clearing the cobwebs created by decades of legacy documents and systems. For example, Redmond did not just put old development regulations on a new platform, but rather we rewrote the entire document first. While that added time and complexity to the process, it resulted in a better product for our citizens and customers. A second obstacle was debugging new technology. Testing and patience overcame those, and some bugs continue to get worked out.

## EFFICIENT USE OF BUDGET

Overall the City invested about \$1.38 million in the *Digital Planning and Development Suite*. The majority of that went toward the purchase, customization, and testing of the new permit tracking system. City staff led all aspects of the project, including developing the Property Viewer entirely in house. Redmond chose platforms for its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code that allow the City to self-publish in real time. The one-time investment for those products has led to ongoing savings in publication costs, and more responsive customer service.

*You've read about it. Now see for yourself: [www.redmond.gov/DigitalSuite](http://www.redmond.gov/DigitalSuite)*

- *Nomination Video*
- *Links to digital Comprehensive Plan, e-Zoning Code, and E-Track*

## AWARD PLAQUE INFORMATION

Name of agency to be listed on award plaque: City of Redmond

Names for individual certificates:

Dave Almond  
Judd Black  
Jeff Churchill  
Traci Disher  
Dan Dulan

Melissa Faga  
Lynda Hall  
Kelsey Johnson  
Thara Johnson  
Carol Lewis

Jason Lynch  
Rob Odle  
Lori Peckol  
Steve Rountree  
Todd Short

Lynn Sjolander  
Carole Stewart  
Sarah Stiteler  
Pete Sullivan  
Cameron Zapata





May 31, 2013

To the Washington State APA/PAW Award Committee:


We are pleased to endorse Redmond's Digital Planning and Development Suite for a 2013 APA/PAW award. Redmond is committed to deploying cutting edge tools for electronic planning, property research, and development review. Redmond's digital Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, and E-Track permit review systems allow applicants, City staff, and the broader community instant access to a full spectrum of planning and development information from anywhere in the world.

Redmond's recent investment in this technology provides tangible benefits to the community in two important ways. First, it allows applicants and City staff to collaborate on projects without requiring a visit to City Hall. Not only is this more convenient, but benefits the environment by reducing vehicle trips. Second, this technology puts the information that the community wants at everyone's fingertips. What is the plan for my neighborhood? What uses are allowed on my property? Where can I locate my small business? What's going on across the street? Answering all these questions can be done by anyone in a matter of a few clicks.

We are proud to be on the leading edge of accessibility and transparency in our planning and permit review processes. These innovations may be used as a model to other communities for increased customer service and saving valuable public and private resources. We would be honored to receive an award from the Washington State APA/PAW in recognition for these efforts.

Sincerely,

  
John Marchione, Mayor

  
Pat Vache, Redmond City Council President

## fwGregory associates

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May 22, 2013

APA/PAW Awards Committee

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Redmond Planning Commission, I am pleased to endorse and support an award by APA/PAW to the City of Redmond for creating a “digital suite” of resources, including its online Comprehensive Plan, e-zoning code, and permit tracking tools.

Redmond undertook major updates to its Comprehensive Plan during 2010-11 with a thorough review by the Planning Commission that included a significant public outreach effort. This effort was highlighted by a major citizen engagement event that focused on integrating sustainability principles into the plan’s 20-year vision. Along with public hearings throughout the review, more than 100 stakeholders actively participated in shaping the updated plan.

One of the outcomes of this process was the decision to create a digital format for Redmond’s planning and permitting documents to promote easier access for citizens and the professional community. The result is a remarkable online resource that functions much like a hard copy document. Users can electronically flip through pages, topics, or sections, while using intuitively organized search features and various linking options.

Overall, this new tool has not only made our job as Planning Commissioners easier, allowing us to keep up more effectively with topics under review, but it has drastically reduced the volume of paper documents on which we used to rely. The response from our neighbors and fellow citizens has likewise been enthusiastic, and we are proud that Redmond was recognized as a leader in providing comprehensive, user-friendly online access with a Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2040 award.

I appreciate your consideration and urge your support for the APA/PAW award, which would reflect well-deserved recognition by the professional planning community.

Sincerely yours,

SS/

Franz Wiechers-Gregory  
Chair, Redmond Planning Commission

May 29, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I am Sue Stewart who was the Co-Chair of the Code Rewrite Commission, a special purpose commission charged with reviewing and amending the city's zoning code to assist in making the process consistent by making it more intuitive and simpler for both the developer and the citizen.

The old code was an aggregate of years of amendments and modifications, which made it very complicated to use. Our task, with staff, not only included the process of consolidation but it was clear that we had a great opportunity to employ the use of digital technology to both improve access but to also provide ease and clarity for the user regardless of expertise.

My colleagues on the Commission included one other citizen with me, representatives from the Planning Commission, and members of the development community who would be the more frequent user. Still, citizens such as me, along with the development community, sought a product that would afford them simple (not complex) access to the code that would ensure that they had accurate information.

As a citizen representing the needs of the community, my interest was having access to the code via a tool that would be simple and intuitive – that a citizen wouldn't need special knowledge to get the answer they need for issues such as tree removal, simple remodeling projects, as well as the ability to audit the developer in their neighborhood/community that they are correctly following the rules.

To the issue of technology, "e-Zoning" has been a gem. It includes several features that make it easier to use, such as pop-up definitions, "best bet" search results, and integration with the City's Property Viewer. The interactive Property Viewer is a GIS map that displays a variety of planning, zoning and property information and that is linked directly to the Zoning Code.

I am very proud of the product that came from this process. We reduced quantity (duplicative and misplaced code), simplified the language to the extent possible, and added digital tools that would allow for cross-linking to other applicable rules/regulations as well as provide visual assistance that otherwise would not be possible.

Thank you for this opportunity to recognize the result of the hard work by staff and the Code Rewrite Commission to afford our community of developers and citizenry a tool that will provide consistency.

Sue Stewart  
Co-Chair  
Code Rewrite Commission

## APPLICATION FEE

Purchase order in process: #00005860 in amount of \$150.