MEMO TO: Planning and Public Works Committee of the Whole

FROM: Judy Fani, Principal Planner

DATE: August 11, 2020

SUBJECT: RZC 21.76.070 Docketing Process Amendments

I. **PURPOSE** ☐ For Info Only ☐ Potential Agenda Item ☒ Scheduled for Council Action

II. **RECOMMENDATION**

The purpose of this memo is to brief the Committee on the Planning Commission's recommendation to Council regarding revisions to Redmond Zoning Code (RZC) 21.76.070.J provisions that govern the process for docketing and approving annual Comprehensive Plan amendments. A Staff Report to Council is scheduled for September 1, 2020.

III. **DEPARTMENT CONTACTS**

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Planning and Community Development Department

IV. **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND**

The process for considering annual amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and related zoning changes ("the docketing process") is established and regulated under the state Growth Management Act (GMA). The state process has been codified by the City of Redmond in RZC 21.76.070.J. Planning staff has undertaken a detailed review of the docketing process and has worked with the Planning Commission to prepare recommended amendments to the zoning code.

Over recent years Planning Commissioners, Council members, applicants and staff have noted concerns about implementing the current docking process. Concerns focused on:

- Unclear timelines that vary from year to year and are not clearly delineated,
- Ambiguous review criteria,
- Misdirected and underdeveloped applications, and
- Lack of application fees.

During the past several months, staff has focused on ways to improve and provide a more predictable docketing process by adopting the following approach:

- Reviewing, in detail, the current docketing process;
- Identifying issues and concerns with the current process;
- Analyzing options to address these issues by gathering input and feedback from Planning Commissioners, input from Councilmembers (from the last two docket review periods), applicants, and staff; and
- Studying reference materials and docketing processes of other jurisdictions, and interviewing staff from other jurisdictions.

Under the research and fact-finding roles of the Planning Commission afforded under RCW 35.63.060, the Commission met twice in 2019 and again in 2020 to inform the scope of the code update. The Technical Committee issued a recommendation on the proposed code on July 7, 2020 which was followed by additional Planning Commission study sessions and a public hearing to identify and review preferred language for code revisions and develop a recommendation to Council. The Planning Commission arrived at a recommendation for a new docketing process at its July 22nd meeting and is scheduled to formally approve the Planning Commission Report on August 12th.

The recommended code revisions (see, Attachment A for the redlined code; Attachment B for a clean text version) address potential process improvements including:

1. Setting clear expectations and timelines for prospective applicants and staff regarding application submittals and review process;
2. Providing a transparent and predictable application review and decision-making schedule for ease of tracking by applicants and community members;
3. Refining threshold decision criteria to evaluate proposals, as well as decision critiera for proposed amendments,by removing ambiguous terms and adding new relevant criteria;
4. Creating a process that allows City Council, Planning Commission and staff to add items to be considered for the annual docket; and
5. Reaffirming Council's legislative discretion over decisions about which proposals get onto the docket, and which docketed proposals get approval as a comprehensive plan amendment.

Fees
Staff will be developing a recommendation for application fees to capture significant staff time and material costs associated with processing proposals. This would require a separate action by Council Resolution and may require amendments to RZC 21.76.030 that would address fee administration and refunds unique to the annual review docket process and pertinent Comprehensive Plan and RZC.

Attachment C describes how identified issues with the current docketing process have been addressed, by the recommended code, to achieve predictability, transparency, and efficiency, and clear expectations for applicants, Planning Commissioners, Council members, and staff.

A. Analysis

Process to Date
- 3P – July 6, 2020
- Planning Commission Study Session, June 10, 2020
- Planning Commission Study Session, June 24, 2020
- Planning Commission Study Session, July 8, 2020
- Planning Commission Study Session/Public Hearing – July 22, 2020
- 3P – August 3, 2020
- Planning Commission, Report Approval – August 12, 2020 (upcoming)

Service Delivery or Fiscal Impacts

The process of amending the docketing process is consistent with the Growth Management Act and the recommended process ensures a transparent, predictable, and efficient process when applicants propose a comprehensive plan amendment.

Staff does not anticipate a fiscal impact associated with Council adoption of this amendment although there may be fiscal impacts associated with Council's action on individual docketed amendments.

Staff anticipates proposing an application fee later this year which may result in a fiscal impact the details of which will be discussed at the time Council studies the fee proposal and chooses whether to adopt (by resolution) application fees.

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V. TIME CONSTRAINTS
Timely adoption of the amendments will ensure that the amended comprehensive plan docketing code process is in place for the next docketing cycle beginning on April 1, 2021.

VI. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Recommended Zoning Code Revisions
Attachment B: Clean Copy of Recommended Zoning Code Revisions
Attachment C: Explanation of Code Revisions