

Why Red Oak Community Center?

Red Oak Community Center is in recognition of the landmark oak tree located between the new community center and City Hall. The tree is a beloved landmark that has often been used for holiday tree lightings and other community events. There are at least 2 additional significant Red Oak trees on the site of the new community center as well.

Design Influence:

The main building entrance and welcome desk will face east and align with this landmark tree, expansive green space, and connections to transit and the rest of Redmond's municipal campus. During the Design Review Board (DRB) process, the architect explained that walls on the gym terrace were pushed back to provide for a proper response to the Heritage Tree (see Pictures 1 and 2).

Additionally, Opsis Architecture utilized the Red Oak as design inspiration for the kids zone space which looks out into the tree to create a "tree house" feel in the space. The screens surrounding the gymnasium were created artistically to have a similar treehouse effect - particularly when sunlight comes through them into the active recreation space.

From the beginning of the design, the community spoke to the importance of feeling as though the building was centered in the northwest. This landmark tree was a pivotal design point for the entire center and has helped to create the facility that we are building.



Picture 1. View from the Southeast with Red Oak Heritage Tree based on DRB input. Tree is not to scale.



Picture 2. Aerial view from the Southeast with Red Oak Heritage Tree. Tree is not to scale

Community Feedback from Questionnaire:

Overall, the community shared that they liked the name Red Oak Community Center because the name reflects a more inclusive space that welcomes and celebrates all ages. Additionally, it embraces connection and preservation to nature, demonstrates symbolism, and honors Redmond's history.

A few notable comments from community members:

- "The reference to oak trees is a nice connection to Redmond history. ***It's important to stay connected to the community's history as we develop for the future.***"
- "Liked moving away from a traditional name that includes "senior" and love the nod towards a beloved landmark. ***But also love how the oak represents honor, nobility, wisdom and longevity like our older citizens of the city.***"
- "I like the idea of naming the center after the Red Oak tree as it *represents the idea of acorns to mighty trees, the way childhood to elder does.*"
- "Embraces the environment/community better and honors how our area is nature focused. It is also less generic than the other choices. *I love how the nearby tree would be highlighted by the community center name--it is one of my favorite things at holiday lights to see the red oak drip with white lights.*"
- "It has a down-home community ring to it. I love the nod to a neighbor, a living symbol of thriving. ***Communities have gathered around special trees throughout the world for as long as there have been communities.***"

Additionally, there has been robust conversation around the word “senior” being incorporated into the permanent facility name. In the public feedback over 30 comments were received, including comments from seniors, that explicitly stated why they felt the word senior should not be included. The primary reason being that with “community center” in the name, it includes seniors as they are part of the community and this is meant to be a welcoming and inclusive space of all Redmond residents, regardless of age. Community members have also expressed during the community engagement portion of the design process since the temporary name was “Redmond Senior & Community Center” that this was a space only for seniors and did not feel included to participate.

Recommendation:

The Parks & Trails Commissions met on July 7, 2022, and passed a motion 4:3 to recommend the permanent name of Red Oak Community center to City Council for adoption, per Resolution No. 1516.