



Meeting Agenda

Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Information: 360.753.8499

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

5:30 PM

Council Chambers, Online and
Via Phone

Register to Attend:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SbCm8ggtQfu3hdS_EH5f4w

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

(Estimated Time: 0-15 Minutes)

During this portion of the meeting, community members may address the Committee for up to two (2) minutes regarding the Committee's business meeting topics.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 5.A [24-0231](#) Approval of February 28, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

- 5.B [24-0276](#) Approval of March 27, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

6. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

- 6.A [24-0353](#) Olympia Downtown Alliance Update

Attachments: [2023 Olympia Downtown Alliance Annual Report](#)

- 6.B [24-0355](#) Creative District Update

Attachments: [Draft Petition for Creative District Recertification Letter](#)

7. **REPORTS AND UPDATES**

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

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the delivery of services and resources. If you require accommodation for your attendance at the City Council Committee meeting, please contact the Council's Executive Assistant at 360.753.8244 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. For hearing impaired, please contact us by dialing the Washington State Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 1.800.833.6384.



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

Approval of February 28, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Agenda Date: 4/24/2024
Agenda Item Number: 5.A
File Number:24-0231

Type: minutes **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Approval of February 28, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Information: 360.753.8499

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 5:30 PM Council Chambers, Online and Via
Phone

Register to Attend:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WhoFzBwTSBGFPfyproJ0jw

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Huỳnh called the meeting to order at: 5:33 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 - Chair Yén Huỳnh, Committee member Clark Gilman and Committee member Dontae Payne

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 5.A** [24-0129](#) Approval of January 24, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 6.A** [24-0169](#) Automated License Plate Reader Cameras Grant Award Briefing

Police Chief Rich Allen and Flock Safety Community Affairs Manager Kristen McLeod provided a briefing on the automated license plate reader cameras grant award. The Committee asked clarifying questions and vocalized their support for the project.

The discussion was completed.

- 6.B** [24-0186](#) Advisory Committee Recruitment Process Update

Strategic Communications Director Kellie Purce Braseth updated the Committee on the advisory committee recruitment process. The Committee discussed the process, asked clarifying questions and chose to add a third night of interviews to the

recruitment process due to the volume of vacancies and necessary candidate interviews.

The discussion was completed.

6.C [24-0187](#) Annual Meeting with Advisory Committee Chairs Preparation

Ms. Purce Braseth provided information on the upcoming Advisory Committee Chairs meeting. The Committee asked clarifying questions and provided direction regarding their preference for how the Advisory Committee Chairs meeting should be conducted.

The discussion was completed.

6.D [24-0180](#) Discussion of the Process for Recruiting and Selecting Members to be Appointed to the City Council's Independent Salary Commission

Assistant City Manager Debbie Sullivan presented the current process for recruiting and selecting members to be appointed to the City Council's Independent Salary Commission and offered recommendations on updates to the current process. The Committee discussed and asked clarifying questions.

Committee member Gilman moved, seconded by Committee member Payne, to recommend to the full City Council as amended the recommendation to update the municipal code to offer a stipend to Commissioners, change the qualifications of being a Commissioner from citizen to resident and remove the qualification of being an elector of Thurston County. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Chair Huynh, Committee member Gilman and Committee member Payne

7. REPORTS AND UPDATES - None

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

Approval of March 27, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Agenda Date: 4/24/2024
Agenda Item Number: 5.B
File Number:24-0276

Type: minutes **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Approval of March 27, 2024 Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes



Meeting Minutes

Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Information: 360.753.8499

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Meeting of the Advisory Committee Chairs

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Yến Huỳnh called the meeting to order at: 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 - Chair Yến Huỳnh, Committee member Clark Gilman and Committee member Dontae Payne

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.A [24-0266](#) Meeting with Advisory Committee/Commission Chairs

The Committee met with the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Liaisons of the City's advisory committees. After introductions, the group discussed work plans, the function of Council liaisons to each committee, highlights of work for each committee, and feedback on the advisory committee application review process.

Clarifying questions were asked throughout the discussion.

The discussion was completed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.



Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

Olympia Downtown Alliance Update

Agenda Date: 4/24/2024
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number: 24-0353

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Olympia Downtown Alliance Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive an update on the Olympia Downtown Alliance.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive an update on the Olympia Downtown Alliance.

Staff Contact:

Mike Reid, Economic Development Director, Office of Community Vitality, 360.753.8591

Presenter(s):

Mike Reid, Economic Development Director

Todd Cutts, Executive Director, Olympia Downtown Alliance

Background and Analysis:

On September 26, 2023, the City Council authorized the City Manager to Sign a Petition in Support of a Proposal to Form a Downtown Improvement District. This district would have provided additional funding to the downtown to address objectives associated with efforts around to clean and safe programming, promotions and special projects in the downtown. The effort required a petition to be signed by property owners reflecting 60% of properties downtown. Unfortunately, the petition drive was unable to achieve the 60% required threshold.

Todd Cutts will provide an update concerning the DID effort as well highlighting continued Olympia Downtown Alliance programming aimed at making downtown a vibrant business district. Some of the efforts to be highlighted are the LoveOly marketing campaign, expanded Downtown Guide efforts,

graffiti abatement program, LoveOly Summerfest, and the “vacant storefront pop-up program”.

Additional discussion to include data showing the recovery of foot traffic activity post pandemic.

Climate Analysis:

One of the community wide action items identified in the Transportation and Land Use Focus area of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan is: T1.13 - Downtown Development Work with developers and investors to identify barriers to new investment and reinvestment projects of residential and commercial in urban centers. Then develop and implement policy changes and incentive programs in response.

Developers and builders often cite the same concerns identified in the Community Survey related to issues around sense of safety and cleanliness.

Equity Analysis:

The City completed a *Community Engagement and Public Opinion Survey* in June 2021. This was a statistically verifiable survey in which some demographic data was collected. The Community Survey did not see a significant disparity or outlying group in how people of color, men, women, and all age range subsets responded to the questions of sense of safety or cleanliness downtown. The majority of all groups indicated that they felt unsafe in the evening downtown and that the City should have more staff removing graffiti and garbage downtown.

In 2023 the City completed a similar survey that articulated many of the same community concerns about downtown.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Downtown is routinely identified as an area of broad community interest with it's role in the economic ecosystem due to its high concentration of locally owned entrepreneurial businesses, position as strong tourism draw, and anchor as an epicenter of our creative economy with a multitude of community and cultural events

Options:

[List viable options the Committee may wish to consider. When a decision is being requested, provide 3 options (approve, modify, or don't approve) and state implications if the recommendation is modified or not approved.]

Financial Impact:

1. Receive the update.
2. Do not received the update.
3. Receive the update at another time.

Attachments:

2023 Olympia Downtown Alliance Annual Report

annual **20**
report **24**



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Downtown, the Heart of Olympia


OLYMPIA
DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE



Dear Olympia Downtown Alliance Members,

For the last 35 years, dating back to 1989, our organization has been a passionate champion for your downtown. Over the last year, we worked to produce programs and projects that provided value to you, our downtown stakeholders, and our entire downtown community. From special events attracting thousands downtown to small business grants sprucing up our street scape, from cascading flower baskets to the service of our Downtown Guides, every dollar we invest goes towards supporting a space our community can be proud of, and our businesses can thrive in.

While our efforts to establish the Downtown Improvement District did not succeed, we remain committed to forging ahead. Through partnerships with public and private stakeholders, we'll continue to seek the resources necessary to exercise our strategic plan. This plan includes imagemaking efforts, advocacy, economic development, and support of a clean, safe, and healthy downtown.

We are proud to present this Annual Report as evidence of the value we provide to you, our members and partners. Your partnerships and participation continue to be essential to the success of our downtown as we look forward to a great 2024!

With gratitude,

Shina Wysocki
President

Todd Cutts
Executive Director



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Board of Directors

NAME

Shina Wysocki

Chelsea Farms Oyster Bar

Erik Johnson

Olympia Computer

Erica Cooper

KBJ Investments

Bobbi Kerr

Olympia Federal Savings

Todd Monohon

Olympic Rentals

Krista Bentow

Dancing Goats Coffee

Jill Barnes

Washington Center

Nate Burgher

Nate Burgher Photography

Janis Dean

The Popinjay

Ryan DiCrescenzo

Property Owner

Daniel Farber

Temple Beth Hatfiloh

Sophia Landis

Sofie's Scoops Gelateria

Aslan Meade

Thurston Economic
Development Council

Angela Maki

Providence Swedish

Mindy Roberts

Union Gospel Mission

Rich Hoey

City of Olympia

POSITION

President, Organization Committee Co-Chair

Vice President, Organization Committee
Co-Chair

Secretary, Organization Committee, Design
Committee Chair

Treasurer, Organization Committee

Past President, Organization Committee

Downtown Vibrancy Committee

Economic Vitality Committee

Promotions Committee

Promotions Committee

Promotion Committee Chair

Downtown Vibrancy Committee Chair

Promotions Committee

Economic Vitality Committee Chair

Promotions Committee

Downtown Vibrancy Committee

*Ex-Officio, Downtown Vibrancy Committee



Staff & Primary Partners

Todd Cutts

Executive Director

Desiree Freeland

Downtown Projects Manager

Kyle Nicholas

Operations Supervisor

Colin Plaeger-Brockway

Downtown Guide

Quillan Halverson

Downtown Guide

Justin Richards

Downtown Guide

Candice Shapiro

Administrative Assistant

Mosaic Marketing Studio

Marketing & Communications

Kellen Jemeyson CPA

Bookkeeping

Strategic Plan

Vision

Olympia's historic downtown is the heart of our region, buoyed by a colorful and welcoming environment, a rich diversity of people and positive experiences, and an activated, engaged community.

Mission

Act as a catalyst for a vibrant and thriving downtown through service to businesses and property owners.

Values

SAFETY We strive to provide a safe environment both to communicate honestly within the organization and to welcome customers coming downtown.

GROWTH We are committed towards affecting positive change both within the organization and in downtown as a whole by employing innovation and strategic thinking.

COMMUNICATION We actively listen and clearly articulate to seek understanding and agreement.

SERVICE We prioritize customer response, tell the truth, and instill trust.

INCLUSION We engage with a diverse group of downtown stakeholders.

Goals

ADVOCACY Channel the voice of the downtown businesses and other stakeholders to compel action in both local and state government.

FINANCIAL HEALTH Ensure varied funding sources and efficient business practices that lead to long-term fiscal solvency for the organization.

CLEAN, SAFE & HEALTHY Support a welcoming environment to ensure business success and a thriving downtown.

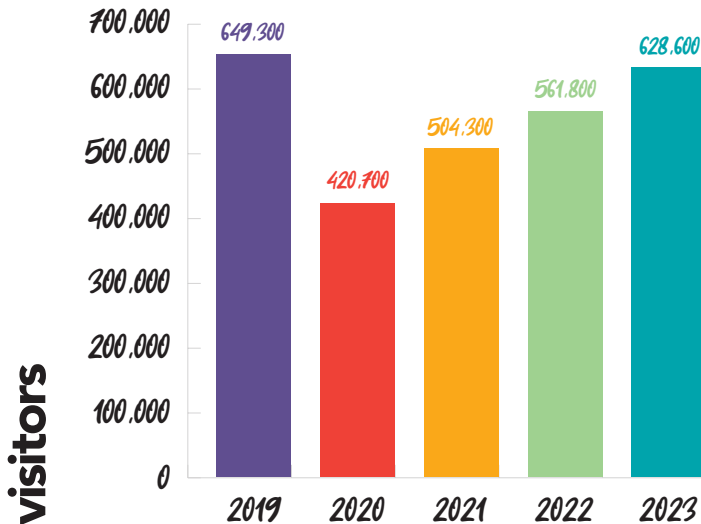
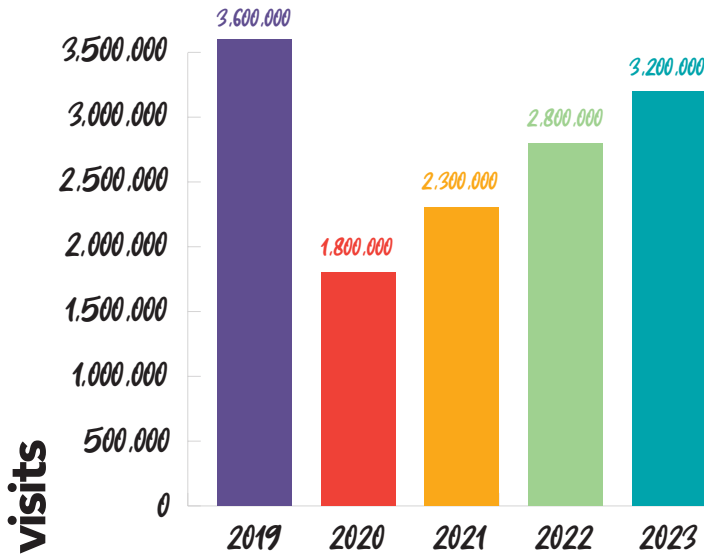
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Develop programming and leverage community partnerships to support a vibrant downtown economy, including current and future businesses.

IMAGEMAKING Improve the community's perception of downtown through enhancements to the physical environment, production of quality events and experiences, and strategic communications and marketing.

Downtown By the Numbers

Downtown has seen an uptick in both visits and visitors every year since 2020. While we have not yet eclipsed our 2019 numbers, the trajectory would indicate we are headed in that direction. The Alliance's strategic plan is intended to keep the arrow pointing up.



*Numbers from placer.ai software.

Economic Development

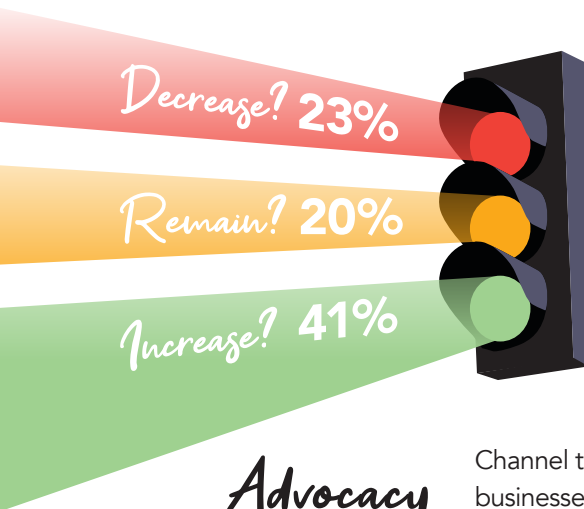
Develop programming and leverage community partnerships to support a vibrant downtown economy, including current and future businesses.

- Distribute Welcome Package to new businesses locating downtown
- Maintain vacant space inventory and provide to prospective downtown businesses and investors

Looking Forward

The Alliance will continue to distribute the Welcome Package and maintain the vacant space database. In addition, the Alliance will administer a pop-up program for entrepreneurs to occupy vacant ground floor spaces downtown.

"Between 2022 and 2023, has your downtown business seen sales..."



2023 vs. 2022

(Jan–Sept 2023 vs. same period 2022)

Data from 2023 Alliance Downtown Vibrancy Survey (99 downtown stakeholders respondents)

Not Applicable 16%

Advocacy

Channel the voice of the downtown businesses and other stakeholders to compel action in both local and state government.

- Continued communication with City Councilmembers and City administration regarding matters related to a clean, safe, and healthy downtown.
- Exploring partnerships and funding with City of Olympia on projects and programs related to execution of the Alliance's strategic plan.

Looking Forward

Continued engagement on above matters and related to the City's Comprehensive Plan update as it relates to the Alliance's mission.

Imagemaking

Improve the community's perception of downtown through enhancements to the physical environment, production of quality events and experiences, and strategic communications and marketing.

Placemaking

LoveOly Microgrants With financial support from the City of Olympia, the Alliance offered the LoveOly Microgrant program, offering grants up to \$500 for any downtown business to make physical improvement to their space or to produce an in-business promotional event.

By The Numbers

15 Total Grants
Projects Included:

4 Murals

4 Updated Signage

4 Events

2 Planter Box Refreshes

1 Lighting Project

1 Restoration Project

Looking Forward The Alliance is seeking funding support from public or private sector partners to ensure this popular program is available in 2024.

Marketing



LoveOly Brand Expansion Launched LoveOly brand as Alliance's external facing downtown customer brand. The expansion of this brand was headlined by a new website, LoveOlyDowntown.com, rebranding of social media channels and newsletter, custom videos highlighting specific businesses, and a local artist poster showcase. LoveOly was also incorporated in the annual downtown visitor guide.

By The Numbers

18,500+

Followers between
IG (9,900) & FB (8,600)

1,420

Newsletter Subscribers
(44% Open Rate)

5,842

Visitors to the new
LoveOly website since
its launch (11/20/23)

Looking Forward

The Alliance will continue efforts to build awareness of the new brand with the ultimate goal of driving more customer traffic and investment downtown.



Events

Shop & Dine Week

May 15-21 This fun event encourages the community to shop and dine downtown with LoveOly gifts awaiting those that complete the Passport challenge.

Looking Forward

The Alliance is considering updates to the event, including timing, duration, and structure, to keep it fresh and interesting for our community.



By The Numbers

- 63 participating businesses
- 98 passports redeemed with an estimated direct economic impact of...
- Over \$17,000 to downtown sales

LoveOly SummerFest

June 23-25 The Alliance brought back this popular street festival in historic Downtown Olympia that included live music and performances, activities for kids and families, a pet parade, a biergarten and more!



By The Numbers

- Visits in event footprint – 13,500
- Unique visitors in event footprint – 11,800
- Average dwell time at event – 102 minutes
- Summer Fest webpage visits – 11,116

Looking Forward

The Alliance is excited to expand and improve this event, and anticipates more attendees in 2024, when the event will take place from June 21-23.

Kid's Halloween Trick or Treat Event

**KID'S HALLOWEEN
TRICK OR TREAT
EVENT**

Saturday, October 28 The Alliance partnered with Mixx 96 to produce this fun trick or treat event, featuring participating merchants, for the first time.

By The Numbers

- 54 Participating Businesses
- 360 Pounds of candy distributed

Looking Forward We're excited about what the event can evolve into in 2024!

Music in the Park

Sundays in July Music in the Park returned every Sunday in July 2023. We moved it to Sundays in 2022 to make it more than just about the tunes – but also a downtown experience, a chance to support local businesses while enjoying a laid-back Sunday afternoon.



By The Numbers

- 1,136 attendees over 5 shows
- Music in the Park webpage has 2,421 views

Looking Forward The Alliance will explore how to balance the goals of bringing more visitors downtown for a positive experience with how to drive customer traffic into our businesses.

Downtown for the Holidays

November 26–December 31

Downtown for the Holidays featured festive holiday decor throughout the month, a shop and dine passport event, and the festivities were kicked off by the WinterFest street festival on November 26.



By The Numbers

- 69 participating businesses in Shop & Dine promotion
- 573 passports redeemed with an estimated direct economic impact of over \$100,000 to downtown sales
- 6,300 visits in WinterFest footprint on day of event

Looking Forward The Alliance will explore how to balance the goals of bringing more visitors downtown for a positive experience with how to drive customer traffic into our businesses.



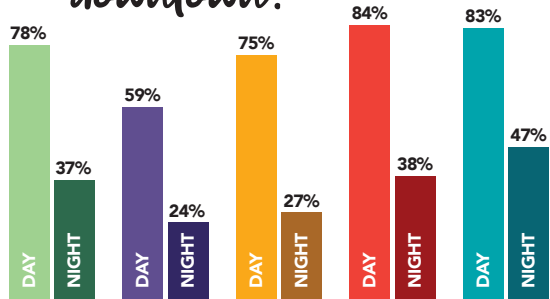
Downtown Guides Program

In 2023, the Downtown Guides continued to serve an ambassadorial role to visitors while also working with those in crisis. The program expanded from two Guides to four in the Fall, as a result of a partnership with the City.

By the Numbers

- 2017 Community Survey
- 2020-2021 Community Survey
- 2021 Downtown Stakeholders Survey
- 2022 Downtown Stakeholders Survey
- 2023 Downtown Stakeholders Survey

How safe do you feel downtown?



Downtown Guide Engagements

	Friendly Engagement	Homeless Outreach	Trespass Engagement	Antisocial Behavior	Provided Food/Water	Social Service Referral
2020	4729	1919	1248	240	1723	785
2021	3055	1810	1129	230	1792	483
2022	3218	1718	863	66	1387	380
2023	3639	1343	745	75	1064	760

Looking Forward

The Alliance is excited to be able to offer expanded service well into 2024 and possibly longer. Continued coordination between the Guide program and the City is essential to a thriving downtown.

Downtown Cleanliness

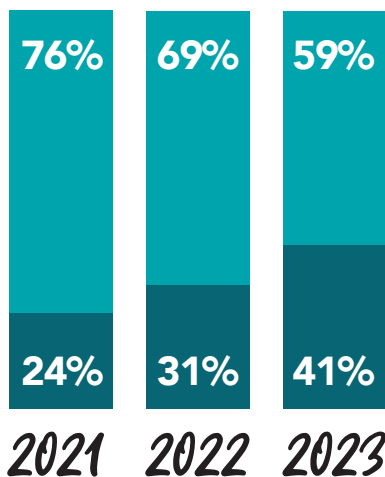
In partnership with the PBIA, the Alliance was able to staff a Downtown Maintenance Worker position. This position was deployed to clean downtown block-by-block year-round, in addition to watering hanging flower baskets from May – October. The Alliance also produced two Downtown Cleanups in 2023 in advance of seasonal Arts Walks.

By the Numbers

In general, how clean do you believe downtown is?

 Unclean

 Clean



Downtown Stakeholders
Survey

Looking Forward

The PBIA has funded the Downtown Maintenance Worker position for 2024 allowing these services to continue. The Alliance will also again produce two Downtown Cleanups.

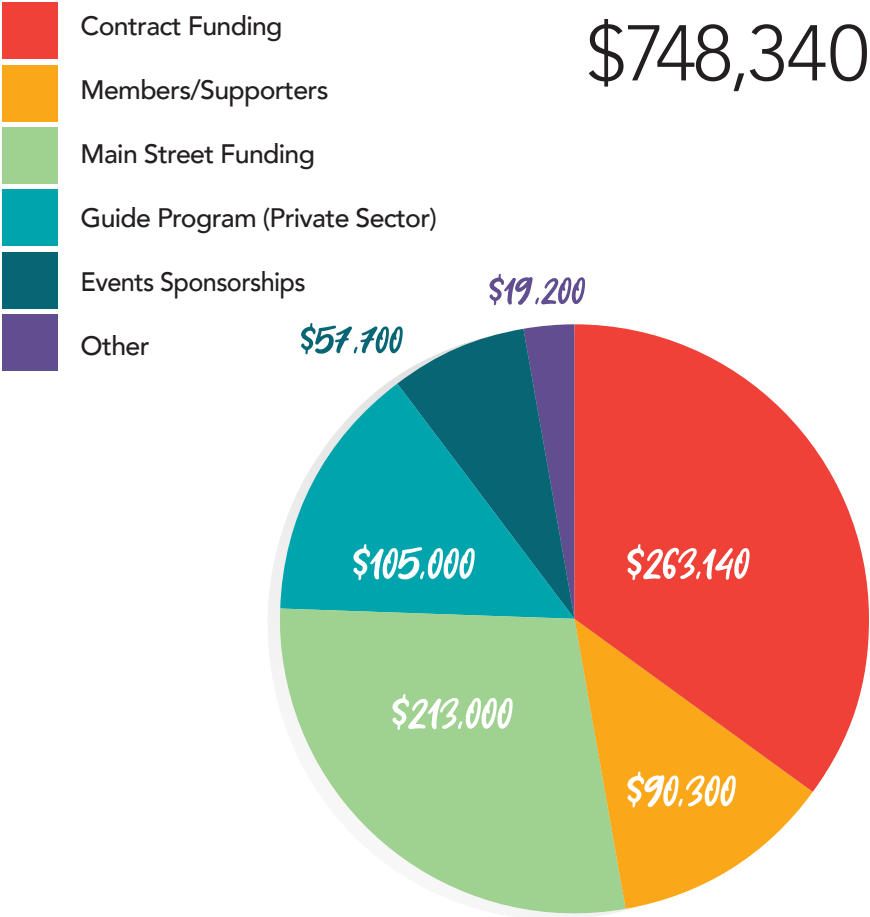


Financial Health

Ensure varied funding sources and efficient business practices that lead to long-term fiscal solvency for the organization.

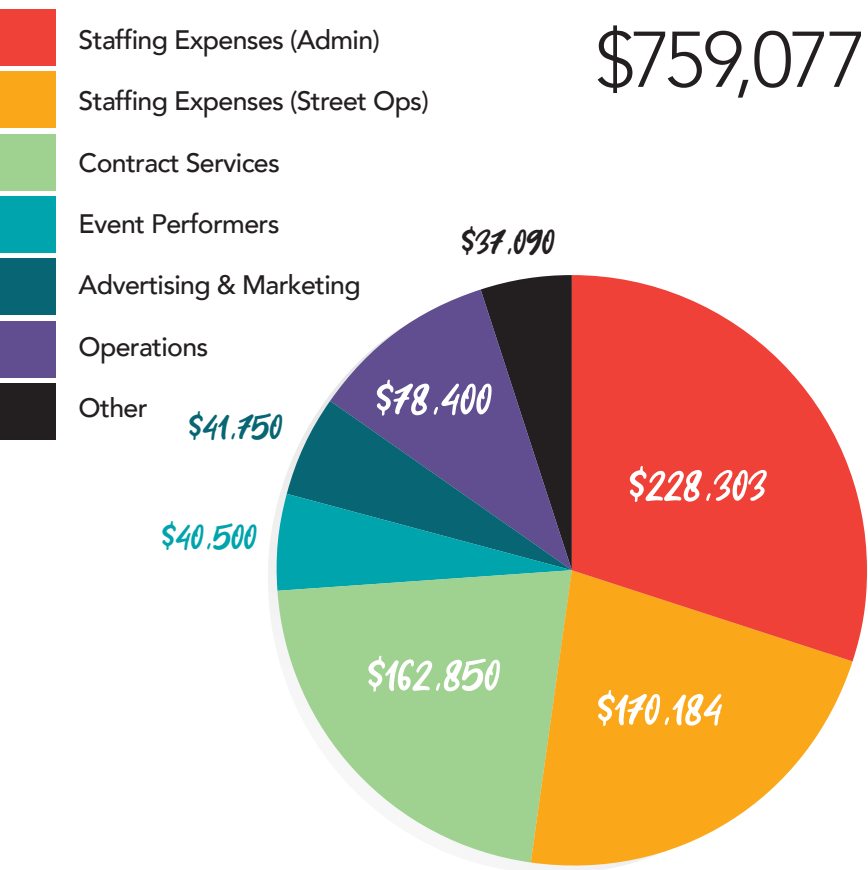
2024 Income

The Alliance continues to receive robust support through the Main Street Business & Occupation Tax Credit program, supporters at defined financial levels, and subscribers to the Downtown Guide service. Financial partnership with the City also fuels Alliance efforts related to specific scoped items covering a variety of programming and projects.



2024 Expenses

The Alliance most important resource in providing value downtown, its employees, constitute over half of its expenses. Nearly another quarter of expenses are apportioned to contractors who partner with Alliance to help support events, marketing, and other important efforts. Performers, marketing costs, and operating costs round out the expense budget.



2023 Year End Actuals	Income:	\$777,450
	Expense:	\$793,457
	Net Operating Income:	-\$16,196

Thank You for Supporting the Alliance

2023 Cornerstone Partners (\$5,000)



2023 Downtown Champions (\$2,400/year)



2023 Leadership Circle (\$1,200/year)

Amy Evans
Bobbi Kerr
Buck's 5th Avenue
Commencement Bank
The Cutts Family
Daylight Properties
Encore Chocolates & Teas

Forma Construction
The Freeland Family
Hands On Children's Museum
Olympia Ballroom
Olympia Computer
Panowicz Jewelers
Union Gospel Mission

2023 Downtown Partners (\$500/yr)

Church Rietzke Johnson, PLLC
Community Solar
Stuart Place



Interested in partnering with the Alliance to further the downtown mission? Consider becoming a supporter!

For more information, scan the QR code or visit

LoveOlyDowntown.com/about-us/supporters.





Community Livability and Public Safety Committee

Creative District Update

Agenda Date: 4/24/2024
Agenda Item Number: 6.B
File Number: 24-0355

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Creative District Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive a creative district update.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive a creative district update.

Staff Contact:

Daisha Versaw, Economic Development Senior Program Specialist, Office of Community Vitality,
360.280.8947

Presenter(s):

Daisha Versaw, Economic Development Senior Program Specialist

Background and Analysis:

On October 25, 2023 staff provided an update concerning the recently completed Creative District Strategic Plan. This presentation will be an update highlighting the efforts affiliated with the Creative district that have recently been completed or are actively underway. Some of these efforts include a scope of work with the Olympia Artspace Alliance, the Parking Business Improvement Area (PBIA) Committee funded Mural Project, the Indie Music Project Phase 2, and the recently sponsored "book talk" with author Shain Shapiro on how cities can grow and support their music ecosystems.

Additionally, the City pursued an ArtsWA grant for additional lighting improvements for the Creative District and were recently informed of the successful application.

Climate Analysis:

Our Creative District is an integral part of our downtown. Elements that help to create a vibrant

downtown also help contribute to climate action. Focusing growth and activity into dense neighborhood areas helps reduce dependence on cars, thereby cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

Elements that help to create a vibrant downtown also help contribute to climate action. Focusing growth and activity into dense neighborhood areas helps reduce dependence on cars, thereby cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

This item is of interest to Downtown Olympia, with regional impact.

Financial Impact:

There are a number of small contracts associated with Creative District work that are held in the Economic Development Department with a few that are funded by the PBIA. There is no additional funding request for Creative District work at this time.

Options:

1. Receive the briefing.
2. Do not receive the briefing.
3. Receive the briefing at another time.

Financial Impact:

There are a number of small contracts associated with Creative District work that are held in the Economic Development Department with a few that are funded by the PBIA. There is no additional funding request for Creative District work at this time.

Attachments:

Draft Petition for Creative District Recertification Letter

Draft - Olympia Creative District Petition for Recertification - May 2024

Certifying Olympia's Creative District in July 2019 served to document the presence of an already-thriving creative economy in downtown Olympia, one deserving of greater city support, with a community hungry for connection. At time of certification, the roughly 30 blocks of Olympia's downtown Creative District included:

- Over 150 Creative Industries
- 38 Food businesses
- 25 Makers and fabricators
- 10 Performance/Event Spaces

These numbers reflect Olympia's long-standing, underlying creative culture. It's who we are. Given that its very nature centers innovation, our creative economy is a dynamic, continually renewing ecosystem that welcomes new voices all the time. Cultivating, supporting, and celebrating this creative impulse in all its forms is likewise perpetually work-in-progress, and the central goal of the Olympia Creative District.

Public Engagement and the Creative District

Olympia's CD Certification was preceded by two important city planning initiatives: The 2017 *Downtown Strategy*, and the 2018 *Arts, Cultures, and Heritage (ArCH) Report*. Both efforts generated extensive community input to develop a vision for a healthy and vibrant downtown economy. The *ArCH Report* focused specifically on Olympia's creative economy, and its recommended actions included seeking CD Certification, and establishing partnership among the city's arts, heritage, planning, and economic development efforts to better support the creative community.

In 2019 the city took the lead in CD certification and also created its ArCH Team of interdisciplinary staff representing the City Manager, Economic Development, Planning, Arts, and Heritage that fall. This team continues to further the work of the Creative District and pursue other actions and initiatives that step up the City's commitment to arts, culture and heritage.

Because Olympia's creative district certification was initiated by the city, the work to build a cohesive community in support of the district yet to be fully undertaken. Moreover, for many among our diverse creative community it has been hard to grasp the what and the why of a creative district designation. Proudly independent and disinclined to solutions from city government, facing concerns about gentrification, increasing costs for food, housing and commercial space, and siloed in many ways by their own independence, it became clear from the start that Olympia's creatives and their allies required broad and deep conversation about their needs and common challenges, in order to build trust and strengthen the sense of community within the district.

In early 2020 we made plans for an ArCH Forum that would gather local creatives together for a series of discussions and learning opportunities oriented to these issues and Creative District development. However, Pandemic conditions forced a dramatic shift in priorities that continued into 2021. The Pandemic's impacts on our downtown were compounded by the social justice movement that followed the murder of George Floyd. As the capitol city and home of the Evergreen State College, activism has a strong tradition in Olympia and the downtown was deeply impacted by protests and the ensuing riots, vandalism, and social division. Efforts to build anything new were supplanted by efforts to stem the

losses and political divisions, support working artists, interact remotely, share virtually, and support outdoor activity.

In 2022 we were able to regroup and begin a nearly year-long Creative District Strategic Planning process involving over 650 individuals through surveys, interviews, and listening sessions that engaged a range of industry sectors. The plan includes five primary goals, and actionable workplans for each: Support, Promotion, Affordable and Accessible space, and Building Community.

In early 2023 the Creative District Strategic Plan was submitted to City Council. Along with Vision, Mission, Values and Goals, it included a recommendation to gradually shift CD leadership from the city to a local arts agency. With that guidance, the city contracted with the Olympia Arts Alliance to begin such a transition. The initial contract with OAA includes a mix of relationship-building, data gathering, programming, and initial efforts to define the character of the district as a foundation for branding.

Branding has been an area of emphasis for ArtsWa, so it is important to address it here. Given the unique and independent spirit of Olympia’s creative community, any effort that put branding at the front end of the Creative District process would have risked being perceived as shallow, and would have been developed under city leadership and without the benefit of a fully-engaged community. We strongly believe that a “with, not for” approach to branding the district will be more fruitful, consistent with our values for inclusiveness, and far more creative. As we continue to work with OAA to build Creative District cohesion and community, describing our district’s character and identity will offer a creative challenge that can unite and inspire. Good things will come.

Summary of Creative District Activity, with *related arts, culture and heritage activities in italics.*

2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Olympia’s Downtown Strategy identifies Entertainment and Artisan/Tech Districts, a vision for district character, and supporting design policy. These are later combined to form the Creative District.</i>
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The ArCH Report is completed; over 30 key individuals across arts, culture and heritage sectors discuss how to expand and support, grow participation in, and strengthen the city’s commitment to the arts, culture & heritage in Olympia.</i>
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olympia Creative District Certification <i>An interdisciplinary team of city staff, the ArCH Team, established “to work together to provide space, visibility, and funding to help our creative community thrive.”</i>
2020 – 2021	<p>Pandemic response forces a shift away from plans for a forum gathering local creatives. Social Justice upheaval compounds impacts Downtown with frequent protests and associated damage. Creative District activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual convenings of industry groups: Olympia’s Theaters, Festival Organizers, Heritage organizations, and local arts agencies meet monthly. Artists at the Community Table, a planned NEA training opportunity for 33 artists and community members, held in revised virtual format. Third Thirty Oral History Project explores origins of Olympia’s creative ecosystem. Transfer of Olympia Armory from Military Dept to City is culmination of years-long effort to craft and share vision for a community arts center. Examination of city zoning and development regulations begun. New flexibility introduced in city regulations for outdoor dining and displays.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists on Board program commissions local artists to paint on boarded storefronts. • Positive Notes program commissions local musicians to record inspiring and uplifting musical performances, shared virtually. • Video commissioned to photo-document the spontaneous artwork that appeared all over downtown in response to the murder of George Floyd. • Interactive online story map and guide to “The Big W,” exploring the ‘W’ shape of our downtown public waterfront, highlights history, art, and public places and encourages safe, outdoor enjoyment of downtown public spaces. • CD Capital grant supports upgrades to theater lighting at the Washington Center for the Performing Arts. • Contract with ODA includes initial work on convening Creative District stakeholders. • <i>Assistance to local creative businesses in securing federal and state pandemic relief funding.</i> • <i>Armory visioning project engages the public in pre-planning discussions to guide future use of the property as a creative campus.</i> • <i>City initiates Cultural Events Program with Juneteenth celebration, increasing city focus on equity, inclusion and belonging.</i>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative District highway signage installed. • Creative District Strategic Planning work gathers input from 658 individuals, increases cohesion across industries and artists in downtown, and develops vision, mission and goals for the Creative District. Recommends local arts agency leadership. • LoveOly programming offers summer and winter downtown festivals in the CD. • CD Capital grant supports design of safety and parking improvements for the historic Capital Theater. • <i>Olympia Music History Project documents Olympia music scene with focus on downtown events and venues.</i> • <i>Inspire Olympia Cultural Access Campaign; Voter initiative passes with overwhelming support in April 2022.</i>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative District Strategic Plan presented to City Council in February. • Key OAA members attend ArtsWA CD Convening in June. • Contract established with Olympia Artspace Alliance in December to lead core Creative District activities. • LoveOly commissions local artists for series of promotional posters for Downtown. • Lighting, cleanliness and safety improvements, and new mural art. • <i>Armory produces Art Interventions: NEA-funded events hosted by local arts, culture and heritage groups engage the public, ‘test-drive’ the facility, and inform rehabilitation design.</i> • <i>City Cultural Events Program hosts, sponsors, or co-hosts 11 cultural events and celebrations, including 4 each year in the Creative District.</i>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD Capital Grant secured to support Artesian Light Market, activating empty city-owned lot in downtown. • City Council amends development regulations to make adaptive re-use of existing buildings less costly, especially for older buildings. • OAA hires local artist as Creative District Lead.

Looking Ahead: Goals for the Next Five Years

Building on data and insight gained in 2022-2023 through public engagement and extensive work sessions, the Downtown Olympia Creative District Strategic Plan was finalized in 2023. This plan made progress on establishing the identity and clarifying the purpose of the Creative District and will serve a framework of actionable long- and short-term implementation goals as the Creative District evolves.

The Creative District Strategic Plan outlines five high-level goals that the City of Olympia will prioritize through 2029, alongside our Creative District Partners:

1. **Build Community:** A web of people, organizations, businesses, and grassroots groups engaged in collaborative relationships rooted in mutual trust and respect.
2. **Support:** Provide educational, financial, and physical resources and advocacy to uplift and empower artists and creative businesses.
3. **Promotions:** To amplify the voice of artists while providing marketing tools and support for community visibility.
4. **Space:** Advocacy for artists and creatives who need specific, affordable space to create, practice or conduct business.
5. **Access:** Equitable accessibility for artists and the broad community to engage without barriers.

In addition to the above broad goals, developing Creative District administration and leadership capacity from within and alongside our community will be a key element of success. Although the City of Olympia has been a key partner and leader in driving the initial certification and establishment of our Creative District, we have long known that finding a way to move into a support role and release leadership of the Creative District to our community will be crucial if the Downtown Olympia Creative district is to be sustainable long-term and embraced in a meaningful way by the broader creative community.

The strategic plan explored several potential options for how the Creative District could be managed:

- By an existing art nonprofit
- By forming a new Creative District nonprofit
- By City contract for services
- By City oversight
- As individual initiatives managed by different entities

Ultimately, the option of a community organization taking responsibility for comprehensive coordination and administration of the strategy emerged as the preferred alternative. There is still some uncertainty around which community organization (if any) is most well-positioned and willing to administer the Creative District, especially as there is no existing Local Arts Agency (LAA) serving Olympia or our broader region. However, the Olympia Artspace Alliance (OAA) has emerged as a strong, local nonprofit partner whose mission is strongly aligned with the Creative District goals and priorities.

2024-2025 Goals

Partnership with the Olympia Artspace Alliance. To support OAA in growing their organizational capacity, move the Creative District Strategic Plan forward, and practice shifting management of the Creative District away from the City and toward the Community, the City of Olympia has contracted with

OAA to advance several strategic goals—with City funding and support—in 2024. These goals connect back to the broader Strategic Plan and include:

- **Ensure Ongoing Arts Programming:** OAA will continue supporting the Creative District through various programs such as Art in Olympia Storefronts, murals, space grants, artist mingles, and meet-up events, focusing on defining, promoting, and branding the Downtown Olympia Creative district.
- **Inventory and Data Collection:** Develop a Downtown Olympia Creative District Directory identifying creative enterprises within the district boundary through direct contact and correspondence, as well as other sources including the City of Olympia, Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA), and other partners.
- **Continuous Outreach and Community Building:** Compile and share resources for artists and creatives, including support programs, grants, financial opportunities, and educational partnerships. Plan events for networking and outreach, promoting cross-promotion and social media exposure.
- **Building Brand Identity:** Develop a branding process for the Creative District, including creation of a logo, signage, asset usage guidelines, and key messaging, aligning with the Creative District Strategic Plan's goals of community building, artist support, promotions, advocacy for affordable space, and equitable access.

In early 2024, OAA hired local artist, David Hoekje, to manage the first three goals, and they are currently hiring for the Brand Identity project in preparation for a start date of June 1, 2024.

Artesian Light Market. The City has earmarked funding and received an ArtsWA grant to support transforming the former “Artesian Commons” in the central corridor of our Creative District into a “Light Market” in support of the Creative District economy. Beginning with critical site improvements, especially lighting, in 2024, our goal is to move toward full activation of this space in 2025 in support of the overarching Creative District Strategic Plan goals of Space and Access.

Armory. While the Armory Creative Campus is currently considered just outside or “in the glow” of the Downtown Olympia Creative District, it will likely become a key Creative District asset through future boundary adjustments. This 50,000 sq. ft. facility on the edge of downtown will provide space, programs and activities to support Olympia’s artistic, collaborative, and entrepreneurial spirit. Eight anchor tenants have been selected, and construction to prepare the site for use will commence in 2024.

Music. Music is a key element of Olympia’s creative economy, culture, and history, and this is reflected in two of our 2024-2025 Creative District goals.

- **The Indie Music Project**—a project of the Olympia Heritage Commission—is an oral history effort to explore the locations, ideas and influences of Olympia’s independent music scene from the 1980’s to early 2000’s. Phase two of this project, which will develop a digital repository that belongs to and is maintained by the community is underway in 2024.
- **Music City** conversation, strategy development, and policy review. In March of 2024, Music City expert Shain Shapiro joined our community for a Creative District conversation on supporting music in policy and planning efforts. Determining capacity to develop a music-specific strategy, fostering follow-up conversations with our music community, and internal policy review based on the initial conversation will occur through 2024-2025.

2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Olympia Artspace Alliance (programming, data collection, and Directory, outreach and community building, and branding/identity work) • Artesian “Light Market” site improvements and RFP development for operations • Creative District boundary adjustment • Armory Creative Campus construction • Indie Music History Project Phase 2 • Music City strategy exploration
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armory Creative Campus activation • Branding and wayfinding implementation and development • Identify policy goals (e.g. parking relief for loading and unloading at shows) and recommend changes
2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •