

DATE: Feb 12, 2014 ECO Project #: 20765  
TO: Community and Economic Revitalization Committee (CERC)<sup>1</sup>  
FROM: Lorelei Juntunen  
SUBJECT: SCOPE FOR COMPLETING A COMMUNITY RENEWAL AREA PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN OLYMPIA

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ECONorthwest is under contract to the City of Olympia to provide redevelopment strategic planning and a Community Renewal Plan (CRP) for downtown Olympia. Significant outreach and technical analysis has been completed, but additional work is needed to advance to Council an adoptable CRP. This memorandum provides the scope for completing the CRP, including preparation for a workshop focused on the Isthmus Area.

The goal of the re-scope remains to produce **an adoptable CRP** that will: (1) address stakeholder concerns about community renewal and help the City move stakeholders toward consensus on a vision for Isthmus redevelopment; (2) define viable projects for Isthmus and roles community renewal can play to achieve these projects ; (3) explain community renewal’s potential to catalyze redevelopment in downtown Olympia. A key component of the revised scope is a community workshop, facilitated with property owners in the Isthmus area and an existing Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in a process of evaluating options for redevelopment of that District. **Because the outcome of the community workshop is primarily about engaging the CAC, and their input is likely to affect collective thinking about the CRP and the process that follows, it is possible that additional re-scoping will be necessary after the design workshop.** The CRA process is likely to move forward in some form regardless of outcomes at the workshop, but the specific steps and areas of focus may shift.

*Expected outcomes:*

- Support outreach and education efforts around the creation of the Community Renewal Area, and a vision for redevelopment of the Isthmus.
- Create a Community Renewal Plan for Downtown Olympia as required by RCW 35.81.010(18) for Council’s consideration.
- Identify what land is to be acquired, buildings demolished or redeveloped and what improvements are to be carried out to revitalize Downtown and in the Isthmus in particular.
- Identify what changes in existing land use regulations are necessary to implement the Community Renewal Plan.
- Create an action plan with clear next steps for project implementation.
- Provide an ample opportunity for public engagement while sustaining a sense of urgency and an action orientation.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly, and sometimes in this document, the “Ad Hoc Committee”

# Tasks

## 1. Isthmus area workshop process

For this workshop, Fregonese Associates, a regional planning and facilitation firm, will join the ECONorthwest team.

### A. Preparation

#### **Property owner meeting** (February 6, 2014)

This first meeting was convened to discuss the purpose and timing of the workshop, to understand the desires, and to encourage the productive engagement in the workshop of the Isthmus area property owners.

#### **CAC meeting: principles and process** (March 6)

To set the workshop conversation off with the right tone, we recommend a pre-meeting with the CAC and property owners<sup>2</sup>, facilitated by Fregonese Associates to accomplish the following:

- Identify a set of principles for the Isthmus that all can agree to. These principles are likely to be basic and high-level statements, such as “the Isthmus must be improved”.
- Identify any areas of disagreement or strongly held opinions that will need to be reconciled through the process.
- Identify and get buy-in on a set of re-use options that can help to test areas of agreement

Fregonese will use instant polling software to allow the participants to remain anonymous, if they choose, in their opinions about the area’s future.

The outcomes of this meeting will significantly shape the agenda and focus of the Design workshop (described in Step 2). With an understanding of likely areas of agreement and disagreement, we can design a workshop and associated visualizations that will best meet the needs of the group.

#### **Community and Economic Revitalization Committee (CERC) Meeting** (March 20)

We will check in with the CERC following these two meetings to report findings from the property owner and CAC meeting, and to review a preliminary agenda and process in advance of the design workshop.

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<sup>2</sup> All references to CAC in this scope assume that property owners in the Isthmus are included as members of the CAC.

## B. Design workshop

### **CAC Design Workshop** (April 5, 2014)

The Consultant and the City will host a workshop with CAC members (including key property owners) to address issues raised in previous CAC meetings. The workshop will focus on the Isthmus, and be organized as a half-day workshop, facilitated by John Fregonese from Fregonese Associates. ECO will work with Fregonese Associates and City staff to design the details of the workshop, but in general, it will follow this format:

- ECO will present the work completed to date, including the market analysis for downtown Olympia. This is important context for understanding the challenges to redevelopment, but also the imperative for action for downtown.
- The purpose of the workshop will be to work toward agreement on potential uses, public improvements, and design characteristics for the Isthmus properties.
- Fregonese Associates effectively uses instant polling technology to anonymously “take the temperature” of participants, and would use this technology for this workshop to move participants toward consensus by providing value statements about area redevelopment and determining the degree of agreement with those statements.

After the workshop, Fregonese Associates will design one or two (depending on the degree of agreement) conceptual diagrams and site plans, which may be augmented with more detailed photo illustrations at a later date (see “optional visualizations” later in the scope).

### **CERC/CAC meeting** (May 15)

At this meeting, the team will present findings and conclusions from the workshop, including site plans, to receive comments that can be used to fine tune the scenarios and ensure that they are ready for additional public comment.

## C. Follow-up

### **Open house** (July, date TBD)

Outputs of the design workshop will be shared with attendees of an open house (described in more detail in the CRP plan completion sections below).

### **Ad Hoc Committee Meeting** (August 21)

We will meet with the Ad Hoc Committee following the CAC meeting to debrief and gather additional feedback for use in preparation of a draft CRP.

### **CAC meeting** (August 21)

The results will be presented at a CAC meeting, along with ideas on how to implement them, to get feedback on how to incorporate the results into a CRP, thoughts about next steps for

additional community engagement and to describe and get feedback on lessons learned through the process.

## **2. Community Renewal Plan process**

### **A. Outreach and public involvement**

ECO will work with City staff to develop materials for and attend an open house that will provide an opportunity for feedback regarding the scenarios from the Isthmus area workshop, but will also provide educational materials and opportunities for feedback regarding the CRP process. The open house will be organized as a drop-in event with topic-specific tables, rather than as a facilitated workshop.

City staff will coordinate venue, invitations, and material production. Fregonese Associates staff will provide refinements to their visualizations and will attend the open house. ECO staff will provide materials regarding CRP, and will attend the open house.

The budget for this task supports additional CAC and Ad Hoc committee meetings, as described in the meetings schedule provided at the end of this work scope. Additional interviews or conversations with property owners or stakeholders may also be necessary; the budget supports some limited additional outreach.

### **B. Planning and analysis**

#### **Evaluation of blight.**

ECO will update (as necessary to reflect a final boundary) its analysis of socio-demographic trends in the Area, including unemployment, household income, as well as real estate trends such as improvement-to-land-value ratios, vacancy rates, crime rates, and floor-to-area ratios and visual surveys. This will include an update to the property-specific findings of health and safety blight. Using these data, ECO will document blight findings within the final boundary.

#### **Project identification and evaluation**

An outcome of the workshop will be a conceptual visualization (or possibly two options) for the area's redevelopment that matches the vision developed through the workshop process. These visualizations, based on preliminary land use code and regulations review, and review of market data and economic viability, will help communicate to the community the power of a public-private partnership on the Isthmus area to transform Downtown Olympia into a more vibrant, urban community. Realizing that many projects would not pencil out through private resources alone, ECO will examine a range of financing tools that could help spur new development in Downtown Olympia, including State and Federal grants, Local Improvement Districts, Section 108 loans, New Market Tax Credits, EB5 foreign investments, sole-source Impact Fees, City revenue bonds, and various tax credits and abatements. While the numbers will be estimates, the team will also roughly forecast future tax revenues that could be generated through redevelopment of the Isthmus area.

Where appropriate, the Consultant will recommend changes to local land-use regulations to better facilitate the desired redevelopment in the Isthmus area. During this analysis, the Consultant will work with staff to confirm consistency with other City planning efforts, such as the updates of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and Shoreline Master Program.

**C. Plan document**

ECO will produce visually appealing draft and final versions of the CRP, and present them to the CAC, the CERC Committee, and Council as described in the meeting schedule at the end of this scope of work. The CRP will reflect the broad input received from stakeholders throughout the process, support the City’s vision for a more vibrant Downtown, and provide a clear path forward on Isthmus area properties for the next five years while meeting the requirements of the Revised Code of Washington as provided in 35.81.010(18).

**D. Additional visualizations**

The budget includes dollars for additional optional visualization in the Isthmus area or other sites. These visualizations may include site plans, photomorphs, massings, or other representations, and will be developed based on conversations between City staff, the CERC, and with Fregonese Associates as needed.

**Budget**

Task	Additional Budget Needed
1. Isthmus Workshop	
1A. Preparation	None. Covered in initial contract.
1B. Workshop	None. Covered in initial contract.
1C. Follow up	None. Covered in initial contract.
2. Community Renewal Plan	
2A. Outreach	\$15,000
2B. Planning and Analysis	\$15,000
2C. Plan document	\$10,000
2D. Additional Visualization (Optional)	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

**Schedule**

Figure 1 provides an overview of key tasks and timeline. Figure 2 provides an overview of meetings and process, with a description of who will attend each meeting.

Figure 1. Overview of key tasks

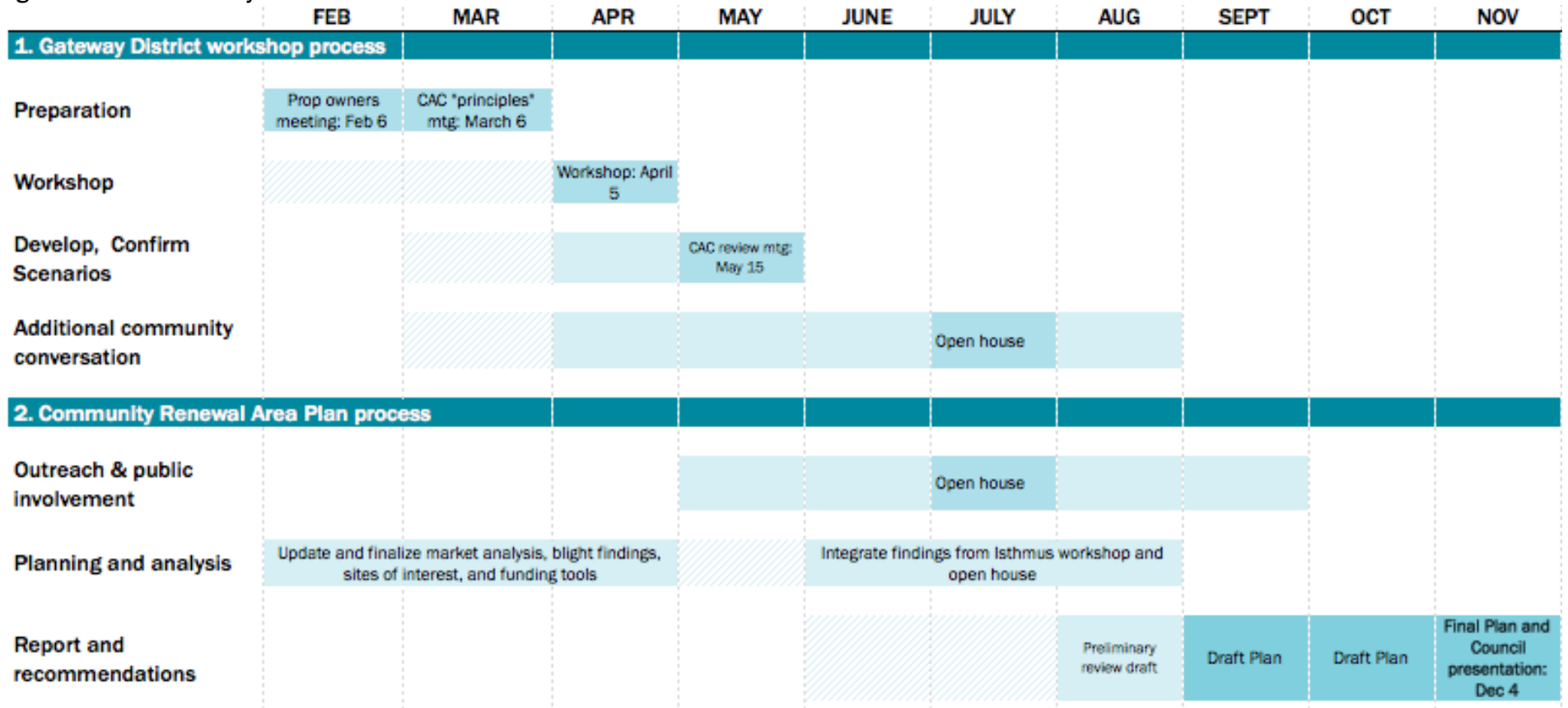


Figure 2. Meeting schedule

Event	Dates	Purpose	CC	Ad Hoc	CAC	Who attends		
						Staff	ECO	Fregonese
Property owners in Gateway	February 6, 2014	Discuss design workshop and interests in Gateway area						
Ad Hoc Committee	March 6, 2014	CRA process update and principles for Gateway area						
CAC mtg	March 6, 2014	CRA process update and principles for Gateway area						
Ad Hoc Committee	March 20, 2014	Finalize CRA process for Council Consideration						
CAC	April 5, 2014	Design workshop for Gateway area						
CAC	May 15, 2014	Fine tune scenarios for workshop						
OPEN HOUSE	Date TBD, in July	CRA and Gateway area						
Ad Hoc Committee	August 21, 2014	Discuss feedback from open house; show final scenarios; Consider initial draft of CRA plan; clarify development toolkit						
CAC	August 21, 2014	Discuss feedback from open house; show final scenarios; consider initial draft of CRA plan						
Ad Hoc Committee	October 16, 2014	Revised draft of CRA plan						
CAC	October 16, 2014	Revised draft of CRA plan						
Ad Hoc Committee	November 13, 2014	Review draft of CRA plan						
Ad Hoc Committee	December 4, 2013	finalize draft for Council consideration						
City Council	late Dec TBD	Final report draft						
City Council	Jan TBD	Final report presentation						