



March 20, 2017

Olympia City Council  
PO Box 1967  
Olympia, WA 98507

Dear Mayor Selby and City Councilmembers:

The Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) has conducted its review of the City of Olympia's Downtown Strategy. Each Planning Commissioner has been engaged in a thorough evaluation reflected below. The Planning Commission also had two participants in the Stakeholder Work Group, Carole Richmond and Missy Watts. We sincerely appreciate the effort put forth by the Community Planning and Development Department to engage the community. Because of this thorough engagement, the overall public response to the completed strategy has been very positive. Additionally, Amy Buckler, City of Olympia Senior Planner, and John Owen of MAKERS, have been open, receptive, and flexible in validating all feedback received.

The City of Olympia Downtown Strategy website states: The Downtown Strategy (DTS) will help to make the community's vision and goals for Downtown a reality. Our vision is for Downtown to be a more vibrant and attractive place to live, work and play. Based on an extensive public process, the Strategy also:

- Identifies community priorities
- Outlines realistic and impactful actions for the next five years
- Guides budgets and work plans
- Builds community partnerships
- Helps us market Downtown

The Planning Commission concludes that, due to the healthy effort to include the public's voice through a variety of communication modalities, the Downtown Strategy should be used as a model for future public engagement efforts. The public engagement efforts truly reflected an open, creative, and innovative effort to speak to all audiences. This assertion was supported in the public comments from the public hearing on February 27, 2017. (See Addendum A)

The effort to outline realistic and impactful actions for the next five years took into account efforts already in motion, such as the Sea Level Rise Response Plan and shaping a strategy to respond to homelessness. It reflected upon Comprehensive Plan expectations, and allowed enough space for vision and creativity to be part of the process.

The public engagement effort included community partners such as the Economic Development Council to help facilitate discussions. Additionally, subject matter experts were surveyed to ensure an accurate depiction of the character areas in order to effectively market Downtown.

The City Council directed the Planning Commission to complete the following with respect to its recommendation regarding the Downtown Strategy:

- Complete a public hearing on the Downtown Strategy-Completed on 2/27/17
- Summarize public comment-See Addendum A
- Memos from the complimentary advisory committees-See Addendum B
- Ensure consistency with the City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan

Before forwarding the final draft to the Council, the Planning Commission recommends staff and consultants make the following changes:

### **General:**

- The Planning Commission sees an opportunity to complete a network diagram or crosswalk that incorporates the external and internal influences to and by the Downtown Strategy. These influences may include other established City of Olympia Plans and Master Plans.
- The biggest area for opportunity would be to provide more of a clear direction for budgets and work plans throughout all of the strategy. There are recommendations in place which can serve as a “guide for budgets and work plans”, however we recommend efforts to create a prioritization of the recommendations within each Downtown Strategy Chapter. More specifically, the Community Planning and Development Department should create an additional heading with each chapter titled, “Capital Facilities Plan Recommendations” in order further define the prioritization of city funds as the strategy plays out.
- Emphasize to the reader that the City plans to update the Downtown Strategy every five years or so, so it is clear that this is a living document and conversations will be continued.
- Make any minor editorial changes (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalize Downtown, make sure images are crisp and words in them can be read, etc.)
- Replace the word “impactful” with “effective” throughout the document.
- Add additional known partners where needed

### **Land Use Chapter:**

- Ensure alignment and reference to the City of Olympia’s Emergency Management program.

- P16: For action LU.1, include more information about the scope of this effort and add the Department of Ecology and the Department of Commerce as partners. Consider the financial impact of a flooding event and its impacts on public and private properties and businesses not prepared for flooding near frequently flooded areas. We recommend an ongoing community engagement plan in order to proactively assess citizens' concerns with regard to flooding and Sea Level Rise.
- P17: For action LU.2, add "assess contamination and any needed mitigation" to the list of considerations under the Land Use bullet

### **Development Incentives Chapter:**

- P 25-26 and "Tool Box" in appendices: Reformatting so easier to read and compare information

### **Design Chapter:**

- Pgs. 62 and 71: Where the report mentions potential legal problems and "unfair economic impacts", soften the language to make clear this is a general implication to consider and not a legal determination. (responds to public comment)
- P 49: Washington "Street" not "Ave"

### **Homelessness in Downtown Chapter:**

- What strikes the Planning Commission as impactful, but contradictory to the intent and recommendations of this chapter, are the pictures used throughout. As the Downtown Strategy is a vision for the future, we recommend the use of pictures to depict what the homeless community could look like if the recommendations within come to fruition. For example, the use of a picture of Quixote Village and a picture of the Veterans Housing on the corner of State and Adams, which would depict what we are working toward as city.
- Review the chapter to ensure sensitivity. People experiencing homelessness should not be referred to as "homeless."
- We recommend the inclusion of the work being done for the City of Olympia Homeless Strategy by ACR Business Consulting.
- P 143: regarding applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and policies: We recommend the inclusion of Comprehensive Plan Public Services Chapter section PS5.1, PS5.2, PS5.6, PS 8.1-8.6 and PS 9.1-9.9.

- P 146 HS.1: Remove “housed and homeless” from the sentence, “Convene a broad range of community stakeholders, include social service providers, business owners, housed and homeless downtown residents....” and create a separate sentence in the recommendation that reads, “We will develop a strategy to proactively seek feedback from the homeless by going to them and where they might seek services versus making them come to us to provide feedback.”
- We recommend the DTS include an additional action to create a Homeless Displacement Strategy that lays out the process for City of Olympia staff to respond to homeless citizens displaced by development and public works projects.

### **Housing Chapter:**

- P 149: Change the sentence, “The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes a target of directing ¼ of the city’s forecasted population growth into downtown” to “The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes a target to accommodate at least one-quarter of the city’s forecasted population growth into Downtown.” (responds to public comment – concern about word “directing”)
- P.153 – clarify that lofts and live/work housing types are included in the projected housing types
- P 164-6: Edits to Action H-1 regarding a Housing Strategy (see Addendum C)
- Regarding applicable Comp Plan goals and policies, we recommend a re-visit of Comprehensive Plan for alignment similar to the Homeless Chapter pages 143 and 144 and other chapters throughout the Downtown Strategy. At a minimum, we recommend the inclusion of Comprehensive Plan Public Services Chapter section PS 8.1-8.6 and PS 9.1-9.9.

### **Transportation Chapter:**

- Address Public Works’ comments (see Addendum D)
- Regarding the Conceptual Streetscape Palette in the appendix, include a cross-reference to indicate the character areas that each pictured element are recommended for.

### **Retail Chapter:**

- It was recommended by the public to emphasize the importance of the Downtown Ambassadors program and the Welcome Center. The Planning Commission recommends that the Downtown Strategy reflect the importance of the Downtown Ambassador Program with respect to budget guidance that would allow for relocation for more accessibility and expanded services.

- P 19: Change ‘vision statement’ from “Healthy businesses and vibrant work/play environment” to “Vibrant dynamic business environment that attracts people, activity and investments” (in line with what the planning team pitched at retail forum)

**Conclusion:**

Overall, the Planning Commission sees alignment with the City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan. Each chapter within the Downtown Strategy includes a thorough reflection of relevant comprehensive plan chapters as well as the public’s perspective.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations to the City of Olympia City Council. We commend the effort, efficiency, and thoroughness of the Community Planning and Development Department to engage the citizens of Olympia and create a vision that truly reflects their citizen’s priorities.

Sincerely,



Brian Mark  
Chair, City of Olympia Planning Commission

BM:nl

Attachments

**Summary of Public Comments from the Planning Commission’s Public Hearing**

	TOPIC	ISSUE or SPECIFIC REQUEST	ORIGIN	STAFF COMMENT
<b>GENERAL</b>				
1	Positive Response	Several comments included overall support for the Downtown Strategy	Oral Testimony; Written Comments	
<b>SUMMARY/ INTRODUCTION</b>				
<b>LAND USE</b>				
2	Sea Level Rise	Urge collaboration with experts who have the most current data regarding sea level rise and the importance of not missing any available data when implementing the Downtown Strategy	Oral Testimony (Sauerhoff)	The DTS recommends the City initiate a Sea Level Rise Response Plan (LU-1), which is set to kick off in 2017. The effort includes consideration of how SLR impacts and mitigation relate to the current and future plan for Downtown.
3	Sea Level Rise	Currently, there are two distinct and disparate time-frame horizons evident in the DTS planning documents that do not correspond to each other in their impact outcomes, as relates to Sea Level Rise Response Planning. (The Comp Plan/housing target is 20 years, the DTS action plan is 5 years and the SLR response plan is 50 years.) Thus, the implications for scenario development vary.	Written Comments (Freeman)	These plans will inform each other as they are updated iteratively over time. The DTS aims to move forward the Comp Plan vision for Downtown and will be updated every 5 years or so. At this time the Comprehensive Plan has goals and policies stating that the north area of Downtown will have an urban development pattern and be protected from the effects of SLR. The SLR response plan aims to set a course for how the City will adapt over a 50 period, asking what is the level of risk we want to manage and how do we get there? This adaption plan could lead to infrastructure investments or changes in the land use plans and regulations for Downtown.
4	Sea Level Rise and Building Construction	Concerns about building structures (as well as street-scape structures), and how building materials and equipment can be designed and located to protect them from flooding.	Written Comments (Freeman)	These concerns are addressed in existing ordinances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance outlines provisions for damage reduction within section 16.70.050 - this covers those questions asked about utilities, construction,</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>underfloor water and flow-through.</li> <li>The Sea Level Rise Ordinance does the same thing. Section 16.80.050 - Provisions for Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction - mirrors the requirements of the flood damage prevention ordinances and provides for very similar protections.</li> </ul>
5	Environmental Impacts of Light Industrial Activity	How would technological/environmental risk be assessed in the Art/Tech area with a SEPA exemption? Would effluent discharge be monitored in the dilution zone of East Bay discharge outfall or in the confluence of East Bay/West Bay discharges, or be routed to the LOTT facility?	Written Comments (Freeman)	<p>This is addressed by OMC 13.20 – Wastewater System - a variety of regulations about wastewater pretreatment and discharge.</p> <p>The SEPA exemption will not apply to Industrial uses, so environmental impacts and mitigation for those uses would be addressed through SEPA if not otherwise addressed in City Codes.</p>
6	Isthmus  (Also relates to design section)	Urges that the DTS should include a recommendation to remove the Capitol Center Building from the isthmus and replace it with a grand public open space. And develop the Fountain Block and west parcels in as open a way as possible.	Public Hearing (Jacobs); Written Comments (FOW)	The DTS recommends an isthmus plan to determine how the city owned land should be used and how this relates to the plans of private land owners (LU-2). The Capitol Center property is privately owned. The issue of purchasing it has been raised to Council before, but they have not directed it.
7	Waterfront setbacks and setbacks	Urge larger setbacks and setbacks to enhance public access and openness of the waterfront. The Shoreline Master Program minimum 30-foot setback is insufficient for a pathway and the setback distance should be increased an additional 25' (55' total) along Percival Landing. Substantial setbacks above the second story are needed to provide an open, airy, bright space for waterfront users.	Public Hearing (Jacobs, Jacobs); Written comment (FOW)	<p>The Shoreline Master Program adopted in 2015 includes regulations that affect “the shoreline” (land within 200’ from the ordinary high water mark (OHWM)). Within the Percival Landing area, buildings must be set back at least 30’ from the OHWM and the maximum building height is 35’.</p> <p>In both the UW and DB zones, If the 2 story residential height bonus is utilized the added floors are required to have 8’ setbacks.</p>
<b>DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES</b>				
8	2-story height bonus for residential	Request that all "height bonuses" be removed from the development code for the area within the DTS	Written Comments	The DTS identifies the need for development incentives; other than areas where the height bonus

		<p>planning boundary. I believe there are enough other incentives in place to encourage development, without adding to heights downtown and on the Port Peninsula. Lower allowable heights will improve the skyline, as well as present less of a liability in terms of overall building mass when sea-level rise becomes a problem and the downtown may be forced to retreat from the shore.</p>	<p>(Richmond)</p>	<p>is recommended to be removed for view protection there does not seem to be a problem with the existing bonus. In fact, two recent developers informed us that the height bonus was key to their project moving forward: 123 4<sup>th</sup> and Columbia Place.</p>
<b>DESIGN</b>				
<p>9</p>	<p>View of Capitol Dome</p>	<p>Urges the Dome and Drum together make a real visual statement and need protection. Refers to page 59 where it is recommended the Capitol Dome view be defined as the Dome only, rather than the Dome and Drum.</p>	<p>Public Hearing (Jacobs); Written Comments (FOW)</p>	<p>Landmark views to the Capitol could be defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dome only</li> <li>• Dome and Drum, or</li> <li>• On a case by case basis.</li> </ul> <p>Staff and consultants have reviewed the prior analysis to confirm that Capitol views within the Downtown planning area identified as ‘unlikely to be affected’ by maximum zoning development would include both the Dome and Drum. This includes the view from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Madison Scenic Park</li> <li>• Puget Sound Navigation Channel</li> <li>• Percival Landing</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge</li> <li>• Deschutes Parkway</li> <li>• Heritage Park (Simmons St)</li> <li>• West Bay Park</li> <li>• Henry &amp; St (development within DT evaluated only)</li> <li>• Quince &amp; Bigelow</li> <li>• Priest Point Park</li> <li>• Port Plaza</li> </ul>



				<p>Prior to the March 20 meeting, consultants will further evaluate the view from the East Bay Overlook and the effect of removing the 2 story height bonus on affecting properties.</p> <p>How the Capitol view is defined will also affect any future regulations to protect views of the Capitol from outside of the Downtown planning area. A citywide views analysis will take place in the future.</p> <p>An earlier typo in the DTS report that stated the landmark view has been defined as the Capitol “Drum” has been corrected to “Dome.”</p>
10	View of Budd Inlet from State Capitol Campus Promontory	View 1 – State Capitol Campus Promontory to Budd Inlet – is defined too narrowly and should include northward views from the north basin of Capitol Lake. (Urges that the DTS should include a recommendation to remove the Capitol Center Building from the isthmus and replace it with a grand public open space)	Public Hearing (Jacobs); Written Comments (FOW)	The DTS process made clear that the intent was to determine existing views important to protect into the future, not to open up views that are obstructed by existing structures
11	View of Capitol Dome from Percival Landing	View 7, Percival Landing to Capitol Dome. Only one observation point was established and analyzed, but urge that the entirety of Percival Landing be analyzed for view protection.	Written Comments (FOW)	The policy in the Comprehensive Plan is to establish views from specific observation points, so the most prominent view to the Capitol Dome was selected for analysis. However, due to its waterfront location, there are several places along the route where views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains can be seen.
12	Views from Waterfront Route	Views from the entirety of the Waterfront Route should be analyzed, and language inserted to provide view protections as the Big W Trail is completed in the future.	Written Comments (FOW)	The policy in the Comprehensive Plan is to establish views from specific observation points
13	Views from East Bay Drive	Along East Bay, a stretch of street, rather than a point along the street should be the view analyzed. Specifically, from the southernmost residence along East Bay Drive to the East Bay Overlook.	Written Comments (FOW)	The policy in the Comprehensive Plan is to establish views from specific observation points

14	Views from I-5	Recommend analysis of views from I-5 to Capitol for possible additional view protection	Written Comments (FOW)	This could be part of a citywide views analysis anticipated in the future
15	Capitol Heights District	The Capitol Height District ordinance should be reviewed	Written Comments (FOW)	This could be noted for future action
16	Language about economic impacts in the draft	The report’s mention of potential legal problems and “unfair economic impacts” seem without merit.	Written Comments (FOW)	Direct staff to soften language in report to make clear this is a general implication to consider, and not a legal determination
17	Bias of surveys re: views	Throughout the public process, noted a clear bias of development over view protection and the surveys were also not statistically valid. Urge that development over views survey results be significantly discounted.	Written Comments (FOW; Bardin)	The online surveys offered another venue for participation, but were not intended to be statistically valid. Some demographic information was collected and is included in the survey summaries which are available online.
18	Parklets	There is no uniform design and they are not consistently maintained by the partnering businesses. Using PBIA money to help fund the parklets is taxing one business to give a subsidy to another business that benefits plus street parking is lost.	Written Comments (Richardson)	We have included crafting design standards for parklets as part of this year’s update to Downtown design guidelines. Initial direction includes that these should not be DIY, should be made of durable materials and always reviewed by the Design Review Board. The PBIA liaison tells me there is no money in the PBIA’s budget for parklets or parklet grants and there is no foreseeable plan for that. On-street parking needs and a variety of other impacts associated with parklets locating in front of businesses are important considerations that warrant siting decisions be made following a transparent public process including Downtown business owners.
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
19	4 <sup>th</sup> Ave couplet	Comment that the Plan doesn’t include Jerry Parker’s dream of changing 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave from a 1-way to 2-way street.	Written Comments (Huber)	Although exploring the “one-way couplet” of 4 <sup>th</sup> and State was brought up by members of the public during the DTS process, the Strategy does not include this as an action within the next 5 years. The reason: Five other street segments are recommended to be transformed over this period (these are in the core

				and can leverage dedicated pavement management funds to create a transformational impact.) Two of these streets require a traffic study; studying conversion of the couplets now would add significant time and complexity to those studies as changing traffic flow on 4 <sup>th</sup> would have impacts to the regional transportation system. The thought is to focus on completing the improvements to the five streets first, and if deemed a priority by Council study 4 <sup>th</sup> as part of the next Comp Plan update.
<b>HOMELESSNESS</b>				
	No comments			
<b>HOUSING</b>				
20	General Edit	Concern about word “directing” in the following sentence: “The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes a target of directing ¼ of the city’s forecasted population growth into downtown.”	Public Hearing (Drebeck)	Direct staff to soften language in final draft. Comp Plan policy PL14.2 states, “At least one-quarter of the forecasted growth is planned for downtown Olympia.”
21	Preserving low cost market rate units	Concerned about the City mandating owners of existing lower income rentals from remodeling these units and raising the rent.  Concerned about how Olympia might implement its goal of maintaining affordable units. He does not want to see the City implement rent control.	Public Hearing (Drebeck; Baxter)	The DTS recommends the City identify actions to encourage property owners, housing agencies and non-profit housing providers to retain current inventory of affordable units (H.4). This would likely be associated with the housing program described in H.2. Doubt the City has authority to <i>mandate</i> rents stay low, but the concept is to find ways to encourage it (e.g., by offering rehabilitation grants or other financial incentives.)
22	Costs associated with rehabilitation of existing buildings	Concerned that the costs associated with rehabilitation or demolition of existing buildings make this not a realistic option.	Public Hearing (Drebeck)	We heard that during the DTS process. The Development Incentives chapter outlines several tools that are currently or could be used by the City to help reduce costs of rehabilitation/adaptive reuse.
23	Effect of view protection on housing	Current restrictions on building height might create a challenge of obtaining the goal of increasing housing units.	Public Hearing (Baxter)	Building heights in Downtown range from 35’ along some parts of the shoreline to 75’ + a 2-story residential height bonus in the Downtown core. Much of Downtown allows heights of 65’ with a 2-story bonus. The economic studies completed as part

				of the DTS determined these heights are sufficient for the Downtown market. The views analysis led to a recommendation to take steps to protect three views that could be impacted by future development under current zoning. The steps include design standards to frame and enhance the views along with removing the 2-story height bonus on blocks associated with two views (hence in those areas, the height would be limited to 65'). Given the market support for 5-6 story buildings in these locations, the removal of the height bonuses on these properties is not anticipated to have much effect on development or housing goals.
24	Implementing affordability goals	When considering affordable housing incentives an actual affordable housing dollar amount needs to be established in order to determine if a developer can meet this goal of supplying affordable units.	Public Hearing (Baxter)	The DTS recommends the City further develop a Downtown Housing strategy (HS-1). Part of that work would be to determine the range of incomes we are planning for and what would be affordable within that range.
<b>RETAIL/BUSINESS &amp; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>				
25	The Port	Would like to see a study that shows the economic benefits from converting the marine business and terminal property to highest and best use (i.e., housing, retail, office, restaurants, hotel, extended Percival Landing, community swimming pool, etc.)	Written Comments (Richardson)	The Port recently completed a study about the economic impacts of their existing operations. Not sure if they completed any further study to compare this with an alternative scenario, but that would be outside of the scope of the Downtown Strategy.
26	Downtown Welcome Center	Emphasize in the report the importance of a Downtown welcome/information center for reasons outlined in letter.	Written Comments (Horn)	There have been recent discussions about the future of the Welcome Center, including representatives from the City, Visitors & Convention Bureau, Olympia Downtown Association, Parking & Business Improvement Area and Capitol Recovery Center. The intent is to move forward with having a Welcome Center, but perhaps in a new location that has a public restroom and other to be determined attributes that will meet best meet the intent of <i>a welcoming place for residents and visitors.</i>



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Arts Commission

DATE: November 1, 2016

SUBJECT: Downtown Strategy

According to the scope for the Downtown Strategy, advisory boards (other than OPC) have a role to advise Council and staff on potential initiatives to include in the Strategy, including the following tasks:

- Receive an informational briefing from staff
- In line with scope, make recommendations for initiatives pertaining to expert purpose and role for consideration by staff and City Council
- Members may participate, listen and/or observe public workshops/meetings

Staff briefed and discussed the strategy with the Commission on April 14, and had a follow-up meeting on downtown streetscapes on June 27, 2016. Several members of the Commission attended the public workshops. Following are proposed initiatives proposed for the 6 year implementation period that are of particular interest to the Commission:

- Initiate a coordinated effort to integrate additional wayfinding and public art into downtown streetscapes. The Arts Commission recommends addressing this opportunity through placement of an artist on the project design team. Some specific opportunities to use public art to enhance unique character areas include:
  - Street segment improvements along 5 streets in the core: Franklin, Jefferson, Legion, Capitol Way and Washington
  - Where Franklin, Jefferson, Capitol Way and Washington projects above cross 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, use design elements in those intersection improvements to calm traffic and enhance the unique Entertainment theme along 4<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Pending legislative action, designate a creative district within downtown that relates one or more of the downtown character areas.

The Arts Commission appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide comment throughout the Downtown Strategy process and welcomes the positive changes the finished plan will affect in downtown Olympia.



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Mayor Selby and Members of the Olympia City Council  
**FROM:** Christina Lock, Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)  
**DATE:** December 6, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** BPAC Comment on Draft Downtown Strategy Recommendations

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is pleased to offer our perspective as you approach the adoption of the Olympia Downtown Strategy. We are struck by the overlap between features of the evolving plan and our interest in promoting active transportation. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Strategy at this point in the process.

First, we commend the process of creating the Strategy. It has been exciting to see all the great planning on the part of City staff as well as community members. We are inspired to see the result of this inclusive process. The Strategy reinforces several of the ideas we presented in our comments on the Capital Facilities Plan. Specifically, we hope the Council will:

- Continue to commit dependable, ongoing funding for bicycle and pedestrian programs.
- Prioritize gaps in the existing bicycle infrastructure. We need to assure that cyclists of all abilities can get to and around downtown.
- Connect to the regional bicycle and pedestrian network. With its shopping, scenic, historic, and cultural attractions, downtown Olympia is probably the largest potential destination for both commuter and recreational cyclists from outside the downtown core.

We are gratified to see the planning documents and public input have drawn such a strong connection between economic activity and a vibrant, safe, and welcoming downtown. "Walkability" is clearly an essential strategy for a robust business community, and downtown business owners already know that people don't spend money from their cars. When we talk about "getting more people on the streets" we really mean "getting more people on the sidewalks." Those who drive downtown must eventually leave their cars to get into businesses and attractions. Since drivers and pedestrians exchange roles, everyone benefits from downtown Olympia being a more walkable place.

We note that a hotel/convention center is mentioned in the draft Strategy materials as one way to bring in more regional visitors. Patrons of convention centers tend to walk in the local area for exercise, sightseeing, and shopping, and are likely to support the kinds of businesses that contribute to the liveliness of downtown. Again, walkability drives economic activity.

An outstanding feature of the Downtown Strategy is increased density, both in the number of people living downtown and the number of destinations people go to, such as shops, cultural activities, and public amenities like the waterfront, etc. The implications are clear:

- More people living downtown. One reason people may move downtown is to reduce their dependence on automobiles and be able to work, shop, eat, and entertain themselves and their guests nearby without having to drive. This could translate into a concentration of more walkers and cyclists as the downtown

Mayor Selby and Members of the Olympia City Council  
December 6, 2016  
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resident population grows. Anecdotally, a recent informal count of bicycles in the common bike storage area at a new market-rate downtown apartment building showed about one and a half bikes per occupied unit. We wonder if this indicates that new downtown residents might be more likely to ride a bicycle than we might assume. Current bicycle parking requirements could be inadequate to fulfill bike parking demand for a growing population that chooses to live within the downtown core.

- More destinations downtown. More destinations in a small area means the destinations are closer together, thus more likely within walking or biking distance. We expect to see, and should plan for, more and better infrastructure for safe pedestrian and cycling use, such as improved crossings, bike corridors, and pedestrian protection from rain and road splashes.

We support slowing car traffic through downtown to help make it a sanctuary for people walking. Bulb-outs, especially on 4th Avenue, will help slow traffic and make downtown more walkable. We also would support diverting higher traffic volumes around downtown as opposed to through downtown. High auto traffic volumes through the core work against the goal of making downtown a more walkable place. To stay in alignment with the goals of the Strategy, we see the downtown core as being best suited to pedestrian, cycle and transit traffic and less suited towards auto through-traffic.

We like the festival street idea, and we support the proposal for shared streets on the north peninsula.

We also support working with the State on a parking strategy and a marketing strategy to encourage state workers to come downtown.

Another key feature of the Strategy is to take better advantage of our geographic assets, notably the waterfront "ribbon" around downtown. Clearly, this asset is most appealing for active transportation users. As the waterfront path develops, we would like to be sure the needs of both cyclists and pedestrians are met. With adequate cycling infrastructure connecting the path to surrounding neighborhoods, the waterfront ribbon trail could provide a longer but safer option for cyclists traveling to and through downtown.

Finally, the BPAC sees buses as complementary to walking and biking. Every bus trip begins and ends with someone either walking or biking. The BPAC supports buses moving through and to downtown, because they expand options for people biking and walking.

We hope this "bicycle and pedestrian" perspective sheds a different and informative light on the Olympia Downtown Strategy. In our view, the Strategy offers a welcome and exciting future, one that we hope will include increasing numbers of residents and visitors using active transportation to enjoy our city.

Sincerely,



**CHRISTINA LOCK**

Chair

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

CL/ms/hr

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cc: Michelle Swanson, AICP, Senior Program Specialist, Public Works Transportation  
BPAC Members

To: The Olympia City Council  
 From: The Olympia Heritage Commission  
 Date: November 30, 2016  
 RE: **Downtown Strategy Draft Recommendations on Heritage**

In its role as steward of Olympia's historic environment, the Heritage Commission has engaged in public outreach programs and reviewed the resulting Downtown Strategy Recommended Actions. Downtown Olympia includes hundreds of historic buildings and spaces that are major contributors to the sense of place within our community's commercial center. The Commission supports striking a balance between preserving Downtown's historical character and constructing compatible, well-designed buildings and spaces to meet current and future needs. With this in mind, the Commission makes the following recommendations on specific draft actions:

**LU.1: Form a Sea level Response (SLR) Plan.**

This needs to include consideration of heritage resources, including the built environment and archaeology.

**LU.5: Identify buildings and tools appropriate for adaptive reuse, and promote these tools.**

**LU.6: Promote incentives and other tools that encourage private investment.**

**LU.6.B: Explore – Program to offer façade improvement grants or loans.**

The toolbox for adaptive reuse, private investment, and façade improvements needs to be sensitive to and promote the enhancement of the historic context of downtown Olympia. Two tools already in use but underutilized for building rehabilitation are Federal and State preservation tax incentives. The upcoming historic architectural survey can provide baseline information for these actions.

**LU.6A: Establish Downtown as an urban infill exemption area for SEPA.**

Because SEPA includes important provisions for the review of potentially significant heritage resources and consultation with affected Tribes, this proposal must address the loss of this opportunity to review potential impacts and conduct meaningful Tribal consultation as required by State and Federal law.

**D.1: Update design guidelines (includes view protection updates, based on 2016 views analysis).**

For those properties designated individually on the Register or located within a historic district, the Commission recommends replacing the design guidelines with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards; see reverse). The Standards are already adopted under OMC 18.12 and used as the main standards for design review of building permit applications for all designated historic properties everywhere else in the city. While they are also referred to in design review Downtown, other design standards conflict with the Standards and dominate decision-making. Using the Standards for Downtown's designated historic properties would unify the City's practice of managing change in its historic environment. It would also reduce developer uncertainty by eliminating the use of multiple sets of regulations.

**D.3: Inventory historic architecture in Downtown.**

The information gathered in this survey will provide a baseline of information on the historical development and current condition of all buildings in our commercial core. This will assist the City's efforts in identifying significant historical design patterns to develop guidance that encourages compatible new design. It will also serve as a catalyst for identifying new tools and approaches for promoting and investing in Downtown. Grant funding for this study has already been secured and a consultant selected.

**D.6: Examine potential expansion of historic district boundary and/or designation of additional historic properties.**

The existing boundaries are narrow and do not accurately reflect the location of our historic downtown. The expansion of the district and individual designation would support the preservation and enhancement of the unique character enjoyed by Olympia residents, businesses and tourists. It would also allow us to expand our promotion of incentive programs, further encouraging private investment in the development of Downtown.

The City Council's vision for a vibrant Downtown is one we share. Thank you for your recognition of the role our ever-evolving historic environment plays in our economic vitality and community identity.

Respectfully,



Holly Davies

Chair, Olympia Heritage Commission



## U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: City Council

FROM: Jim Nieland, Chair  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

DATE: December 22, 2016

SUBJECT: Downtown Strategy

According to the Council-adopted scope for the Downtown Strategy, advisory boards (other than OPC) have a role to advise Council and staff on potential initiatives to include in the Strategy, including the following tasks:

- Receive an informational briefing from staff
- In line with scope, make recommendations for initiatives pertaining to expert purpose and role for consideration by staff and City Council
- Members may participate, listen and/or observe public workshops/meetings

At the August 18, 2016 meeting, PRAC received a briefing and provided parks related feedback to staff for incorporation into the Strategy's draft recommended actions. At the December 15, 2015 meeting, PRAC reviewed the Strategy's proposed actions and provided the following comments (note, a quorum was not present).

- Views from parks and trails are important and PRAC would like to be involved in any future work efforts that may affect or impact important views from parks or trails.
- A PRAC member has volunteered to participate on the technical committee for the upcoming downtown regulations and design guidelines update.

PRAC appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide comment throughout the Downtown Strategy process and welcomes the positive changes the finished plan will affect in downtown Olympia.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### H.1 Develop a Comprehensive Housing Strategy to establish a mixed income residential community in Downtown.

#### Description and Intent

Setting the stage for Downtown to be a mixed income neighborhood is an important community goal. While the City has previously taken several steps to encourage Downtown housing, a more comprehensive housing strategy will help the City stimulate a diversity of housing options in Downtown as the area continues to grow. Rather than putting regulations and incentives in place and then waiting for the market to respond (as in the past,) the recommendation is for a more proactive approach working toward stated housing goals. This is not a one-off step, rather a strategy to be carried out by an ongoing program described in HS.2.

The strategy should include the following:

*Consider*

- **City-wide and Regional Housing Conditions:** Consider Downtown housing in the context of city-wide and regional housing goals;

*Establish*

- **Affordability Goals:** Identify affordability needs and goals through further community conversations and analysis (this effort should include a robust public conversation leading to specific City Council directives regarding the number and types of housing needed to help achieve affordability levels as well as measures to strengthen local neighborhoods.) These goals must be specific enough so that it is possible to determine (through the monitoring program) whether or not sufficient housing is being provided for all income levels, *while also being mindful that the City can influence the market, but not control it.*

*Create*

- **A Means to Monitor Progress and Adapt to Changing Needs:** Establish a monitoring program to periodically assess housing affordability, production levels, inventories, and other conditions relative to City goals. This is necessary to ensure that affordability goals can be met in the future as market, economic conditions, and population demographics change.
- **Identify a Variety of Implementation Measures and Development Incentives to Achieve Housing Goals:** Identify best practice incentives and other tools that the City can use to stimulate housing for households of various affordability levels. While there is some overlap, generally the tools available to the City to encourage market rate housing are different from the tools used to encourage subsidized housing. Likewise, an entirely different set of approaches may be used to work in partnership with social service and non-profit sectors to support the continuum of care that helps people experiencing homelessness transition into housing. (See the Development Incentive Tool Kit chapter for additional information.)
- **Identify Fund Sources:** Identify the resources necessary to effectively support the above-listed efforts, including both public policy and longer-term funding commitments. Also identify the resources necessary to achieve housing options for the full spectrum of household income levels (both expenses and revenues.)

**Timeframe**

2018 - 2019.

**Lead**

Community Planning and Development.

**Partners and Participants**

Council, Planning Commission, Olympia community and public; Other jurisdictions in the County; TRPC; Social Services; non-profits; private sector *housing developers*

**Implementation Steps**

1. **Scope and Budget:** City Council scopes the housing strategy and approves a budget (2017).
2. **Public Process to Form the Strategy:** The City initiates a discussion of affordable housing goals and objectives (2018).
3. **Implement Strategy:** Once the City Council adopts the specific objectives, program elements and budget, a CPD led team carries out the program further described in HS.2 (2019 and beyond).

**Relationship to Other Actions**

All of the other Housing Actions are important to set the stage for a comprehensive housing strategy. Additional actions that help set the stage for this effort include:

- H.2** Allocating additional resources to implement the plan will likely be necessary.
  - LU.6** Promote incentives and other tools that encourage private investment is a necessary action in order to encourage new housing development.
  - LU.3** Update zoning & development standards; includes recommendations for revising the UR zone in Southeast Downtown which will help to stabilize that neighborhood and increase residential development opportunities.
  - LU.1** Form a Sea Level Response (SLR) Plan will reduce the uncertainty related to this issue.
  - LU.7** Apply for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant and other federal, state funds to assist with assessment or clean-up of site contamination will assist property owners in addressing potentially costly site conditions.
  - HS.1** Convene a broad range of stakeholders to form a more coordinated response to homelessness will lead to broader understanding and agreement about transitional housing needs in the region.
- Transportation Element:** Upgrading streetscape quality will make downtown residences more desirable and encourage market rate housing development.
- 2017 Missing Middle Code Updates:** which will review options for increasing density and supporting infill housing in existing neighborhoods city-wide, including southeast Downtown neighborhood.

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**2017 Missing Middle Code Updates:** which will review options for increasing density and supporting infill housing in existing neighborhoods city-wide, including southeast Downtown neighborhood.

**Amy Buckler**

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**From:** Amy Buckler  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2017 11:59 AM  
**To:** Amy Buckler  
**Subject:** FW: Streetscape palette

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**From:** Sophie Stimson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2017 12:45 PM  
**To:** Amy Buckler  
**Subject:** RE: Streetscape palette

Amy

Here are some other comments from me on the whole report:

Pg 7: Explain that Capitol and Franklin are highlighted on the map because our short term street improvements will support and enhance the transit service along these streets.

Pg 11: I think we agreed that Legion would not be shared street from Capitol to Water. This is shown on the map.

Pg 15: Change Transportation Management Plan to Transportation Master Plan.

On the Recommended Actions pages, seems like the ODA and PBIA should be listed for nearly all the actions. Should we just skip the "Partners and Participants" and just show the lead department? If not we should add ODA and PBIA to T1 and T2.

Pg 24: I was confused about the "sidewalk trail along Water Street." Water doesn't connect to the campus. Do they mean Columbia?

Pg 28 towards the bottom. It is not necessary to say existing light fixtures should be updated to LED. All streetlights should be LED.

Pg 31. Bike lanes along the curb can still be designed to include bulb outs. Not a big deal. Just pointing it out. Also on page 42. Consider removing that sentence.

Pg 31. Let's use a sharrow picture that illustrated the design we are referring to – a bike lane in one direction and sharrow in the other. I can get this picture if needed. We use this design on several streets. As a sharrow photo this is nice but not representative of the design we are referring to.

Pg 61. The cross section shown may not be acceptable for Fire access. Please just add a note that it would need to be reviewed for emergency vehicle access.

New illustrations are great! Pg 33 festival street, Pg 52 Curb design, Pg 62 Bollards

Share as you see fit.

Thanks, Sophie