



# OLYMPIA DOWNTOWN STRATEGY

Downtown Olympia is South Puget Sound’s regional hub for economic and social activity. With eclectic shopping and dining, numerous arts and entertainment venues and a rich historic fabric, Downtown has much to offer. In addition, recent public and private investments totaling over \$180m have set the stage for a budding renaissance that is realizing numerous community goals.

However, Downtown faces some challenges—development uncertainties related to sea level rise and site contamination, a continuing need for inclusive residential opportunities and a vibrant business and retail environment, and homelessness and street dependency. The Downtown Strategy is the City’s effort to address these concerns with a clear set of actions to sustain and improve downtown for its residents, workers, and visitors.

The Downtown Strategy’s recommended actions will be impactful—by meeting multiple goals at once—and realistic in terms of resources and timing. It also focuses on preserving Olympia’s unique qualities, like its waterfront and natural setting and eclectic and

historic character. Specifically, the actions forward the following themes identified early in the process:

- Waterfront and natural setting,
- Family friendly,
- Pedestrian and people-oriented public spaces,
- Walkable lifestyle,
- Vibrant, diverse economic center (reduce development uncertainties and encourage private investment),
- Environmentally conscious building and site design,
- Historic character preservation,
- Diversity of housing, and
- Safe and comfortable bicycle routes.

Many of the actions are already underway or are currently being initiated. The Downtown Strategy includes these efforts as well as a number of proposals that arose during the planning process. Inside are some of the key ideas that have emerged. As the display illustrates, some proposals are for downtown-wide programs while others are specific to the colored “character areas” identified on the map.

# DOWNTOWN STRATEGY

## DOWNTOWN-WIDE

The recommended actions interrelate and address multiple goals simultaneously. For example, encouraging development that fits in its character area leads to a more beautiful and unique Downtown while also supporting a vibrant retail environment. Sample actions are provided below and to the right.

Evolve Downtown into an even more beautiful, safe, welcoming, and eclectic place:

- Update and simplify building and street development code and design guidelines based on Downtown's unique qualities (including views)
- Apply for an EPA brownfields assessment grant to remove uncertainty about contaminated sites

Ensure that people can get around by foot, bicycle, transit, and car with ease on attractive streets:

- Transform five street segments in the retail core to make the pedestrian experience spectacular
- Explore new and diverse funding options for sidewalk repair and street improvements
- Incorporate public art and directional signs/elements to cultivate character areas

Encourage private investment and a vibrant business and retail environment:

- Use a host of tools to encourage retail and development that fulfills Downtown goals
- Complete the Downtown Parking Strategy for more convenient, available parking to support local business and residential needs
- Complete an evening lighting audit to lead to safe and character-appropriate lighting for streets, alleys, and parking lots

Keep Downtown livable and accommodate a mix of incomes and lifestyles:

- Develop a comprehensive "Housing Strategy" that identifies affordability needs and goals, establishes a monitoring program, identifies tools to fill the housing gaps, and is backed up with policy and funding commitments
- Use incentives to retain existing and encourage new market rate and lower cost affordable housing
- Work with partners to form an Olympia Coordinated Homeless Strategy

## WATERFRONT

- Complete and market the Olympia Waterfront Route (ped/bike trail)
- Form a Sea Level Response Plan
- Develop a plan for the isthmus
- With partners, develop an action plan to enhance and promote waterfront recreation activities

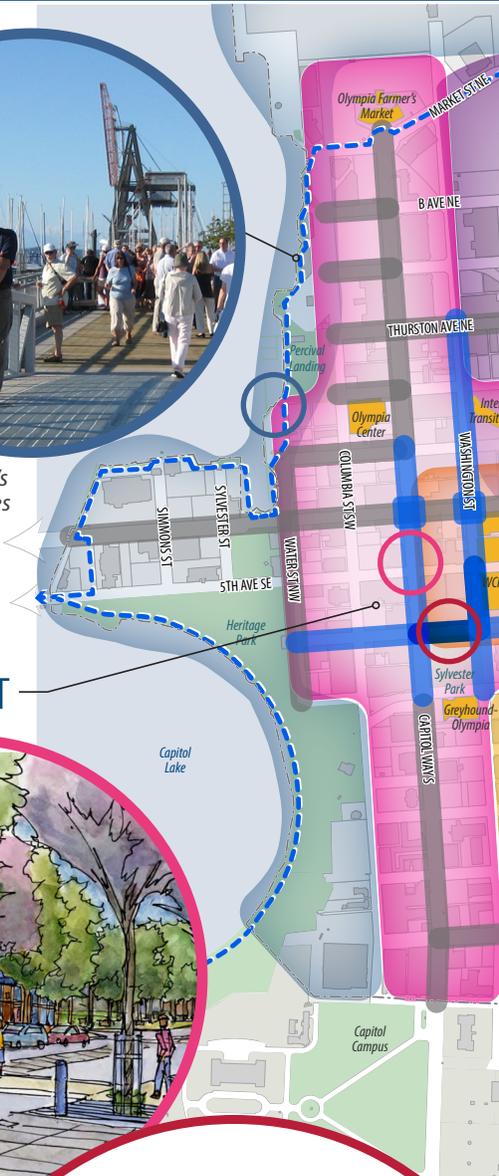
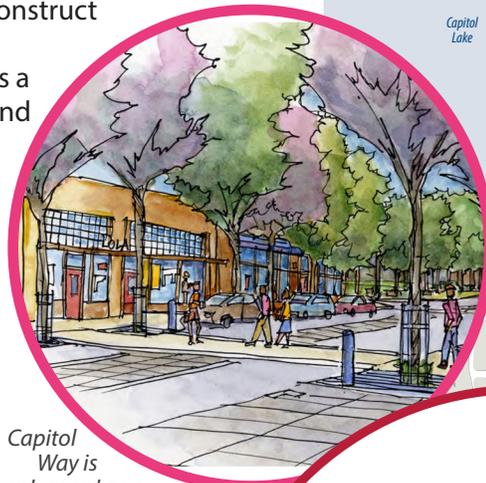
*A beautiful pedestrian and bicycle trail—the Olympia Waterfront Route—highlights Olympia's unique qualities*



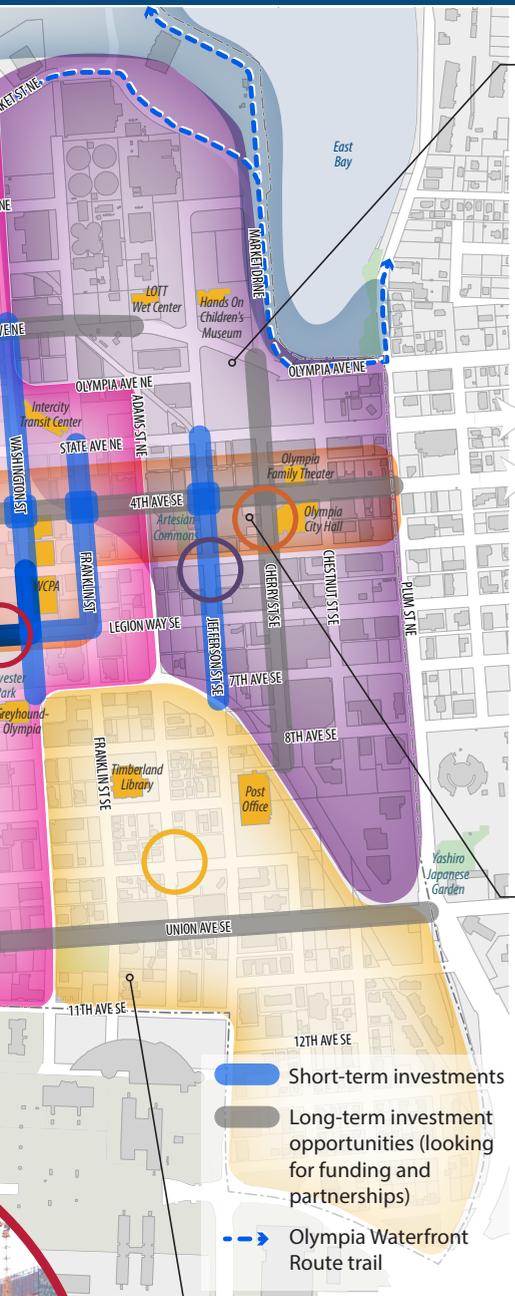
## CAPITOL TO MARKET

- Design and construct a segment of Legion Way as a landscaped and artistic street that easily converts to a car-free zone for festivals
- Improve Capitol Way, especially for pedestrians and transit
- Design and construct Franklin Ave to elegantly accommodate people, transit, and cars
- Improve Washington St for bicycles
- Implement a host of tools for supporting local retail

*Capitol Way is enhanced as a multi-modal spine*



# ACTIONS



## ARTISAN/TECH

- Encourage existing buildings to be adapted and reused rather than replaced over time
- Design and construct Jefferson St to add to the Art/Tech character, be greener, and be more pedestrian-friendly
- Encourage arts, science education, family entertainment, artisan manufacturing, brewing, distilling, culinary arts, etc.

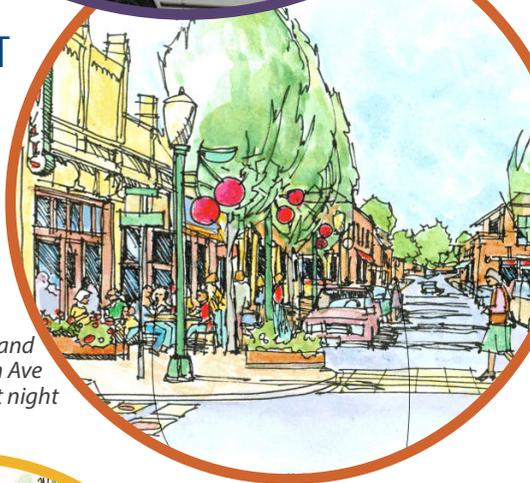
*Jefferson St gets street trees, existing buildings in the Art/Tech area are reused, and new buildings have an eclectic character*



## ENTERTAINMENT

- Slow traffic at intersections along 4th Ave
- Develop a nightlife/safety plan
- Emphasize art features and entertainment activities

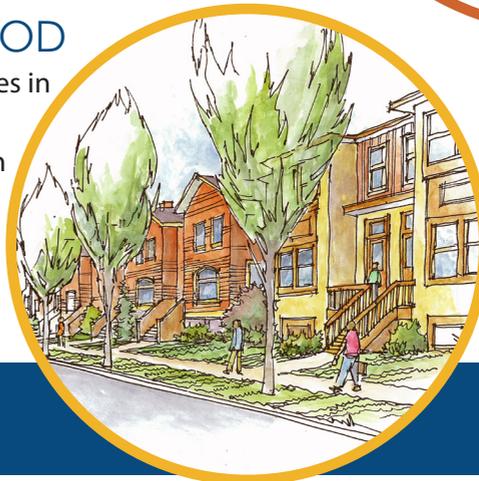
*Blocks north and south of 4th Ave are lively at night*



## SE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Incorporate pedestrian amenities in new street standards
- Encourage local-serving retail in the area
- Explore park needs

*Legion Ave paving and landscaping is more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly and ready for festivals*



*New development includes a variety of housing types and transitions gracefully between new and old and large and small buildings*

## THE STRATEGY MEETS GOALS

Over 3,500 community members (from Olympia and other areas of the county) helped to shape the Downtown Strategy through workshops and online. Thanks to their time and effort, Olympia has a path forward for sustaining and improving Downtown. For a complete list of actions and background information, see the full Downtown Strategy at [olympiawa.gov/dts](http://olympiawa.gov/dts) (available December 2016). In the report, the actions are organized by the categories below—land use, transportation, housing, and community and economic development.

### LAND USE

walkable urban center

### TRANSPORTATION

multi-modal,  
attractive streets

### HOUSING

livable, mixed income  
neighborhoods

### COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

healthy businesses  
and vibrant work/play  
environment

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/CITYWIDE ACTION PLAN OUTCOMES FOR DOWNTOWN

Not only do the actions reflect community goals raised in this process, but they also work toward the Comprehensive Plan's vision for Downtown:

- 1 A vibrant, attractive urban destination
- 2 A safe and welcoming Downtown for all
- 3 A mix of urban housing options
- 4 A variety of businesses
- 5 Connections to our cultural and historic fabric
- 6 Engaging arts and entertainment experiences

## PUBLIC PROCESS

Through five public workshops, four online surveys, nine Stakeholder Work Group meetings, multiple City Council and Land Use and Environment Committee briefings and discussions, and many meetings with targeted participants (e.g., social services and affordable housing providers, retailers, developers, architects, and arts and theater representatives), we are confident the Downtown Strategy represents community views.



*We began the process by asking participants about their goals for downtown, including where and what types of residential and other development they would like to see.*



*Then we asked what actions would improve living, working, and visiting downtown.*



*Finally, we discussed specific strategies for meeting downtown goals, like tools for housing affordability and landmark views preservation.*

The Downtown Strategy ties together many community conversations and reflects local values and goals.



## STAY IN TOUCH!

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