



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 4th Ave, use design elements in those intersection improvements to calm traffic and enhance the unique Entertainment theme along 4th 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

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

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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.