



## Meeting Minutes

### Downtown Strategy Stakeholder Work Group

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Amy Buckler  
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**Wednesday, January 6, 2016**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

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#### ROLL CALL

**Present:** 17 - Alternate Tessa Andrascik, Committee member Janice Arnold, Committee member Clydia Cuykendall, Committee member Janae Huber, Committee member Meg Martin, Alternate Kim Murillo, Committee member Jessicarae Nunez, Committee member Karen Parkhurst, Committee member Connie Phegley, Committee member Dave Platt, Committee member Karen Reagan, Committee member Mike Reid, Alternate Carole Richmond, Committee member Annette Roth, Committee member Terry Wilson, Committee member Bob Wubben, and Committee member Missy Watts

**Excused:** 2 - Alternate Ruben Nunez, and Alternate Vita Zvirzdys-Farler

#### OTHERS PRESENT

City Staff Present:

Community Planning and Development Senior Planner Amy Buckler

Economic Development Director Renée Sunde

Deputy Director Leonard Bauer

Senior Program Specialist Mark Rentfrow

MAKERS Consultant Group Present:

John Owen, Kendra Dahlen and Greg Easton

Thurston Economic Development Council Project Manager Kyle Wiese

#### 1. WELCOME

Ms. Dahlen welcomed group members and the public. She indicated though the meeting is open to the public there is not a public comment time. Staff can be emailed at [dts@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dts@ci.olympia.wa.us) by anyone interested in making a comment or with questions.

#### 2. MEETING OBJECTIVES

Ms. Dahlen reviewed the meeting objectives:

- Highlights from the Downtown Business Survey, Kyle Wiese, Economic Development Council
- Presentation and discussion of business and economic market analysis, Greg

- Easton, MAKERS consulting team
- Presentation, discussion and refinement of three land use and urban design scenarios, John Owen, MAKERS consulting team

### 3. AGENDA ITEMS

#### [16-0028](#) Agenda Item Attachments

Ms. Sunde introduced Kyle Wiese, Project Manager for the Thurston County Economic Development Council.

Mr. Wiese reviewed the Olympia Downtown Business Survey Results.

Businesses identified things that could be done to support business and economic development.

#### Most common responses in order of significance:

- Vagrancy
- Parking
- Police presence and walking patrol
- Increased market rate housing and urban density
- Reflect a greater level of overall cleanliness
- Pedestrian friendliness
- Public restroom availability
- Increased festivals and events
- Improve communications to help coordinate improvements and development

#### Summary of survey data:

- 81% of businesses serve a local or regional market
- 95% of respondents are either emerging, growing or maturing within their lifecycle
- 88% of businesses either increased their workforce or remained stable

#### Most consistent themes throughout:

- An increase in homelessness and transient population projects negative perceptions that makes downtown feel unsafe to visit and patronize business establishments.
- Limited access to parking negatively impacts businesses by way of customers who choose not to shop in downtown because parking is difficult to locate and navigate.

Greg Easton from MAKERS Consultant Group presented a Preliminary Market Analysis:

#### Summary of Retail Opportunity:

- Existing strengths in "lifestyle" sectors.
- Capture share of regional growth.
- Increase share of selected segments with increased attractiveness of downtown

as destination.

- Increased sales to growing downtown population.
- Encourage independent regional and local businesses.

Elements of Retail Strategy:

- Projected retail demand.
- Peer communities (arts, education, recreation, tourism).
- Retail prospects (expansion of existing, attraction of regional businesses, encouragement of local entrepreneurs).
- Available properties.
- Responsible parties (development agencies, real estate networks, existing businesses, property owners).

Summary of Office Opportunity:

- Strong long-term growth projected in private office-using employment.
- Downtown Olympia is premier location for finance and professional services sectors.
- Business services are key element of supply chain for targeted clusters for region.
- Vacant space may offer affordable space for startup business.
- With improvements in physical and commercial conditions, Downtown will be increasingly attractive.

Summary of Industrial Opportunity:

- Downtown doesn't offer large affordable sites but does offer affordable buildings.
- Established businesses as well as startups have one to four employees and have modest space needs.
- Targeted businesses include brewing/distilling, environmental products and services, information, and arts.

Discussion - Mr. Easton and Staff responded to comments and questions from the group:

- Examples of wholesale trade for Thurston County would be a commercial warehouse or a distribution facility.
- Six percent of the growth in downtown will come from new residences. This projection was determined by taking an estimated 3200 new residences and estimating what types of purchases people make close to their homes. Residents estimated purchases are \$5,000 per person per year.
- Approaches to addressing changing retail market conditions and purchasing habits include attracting businesses that are sustainable and growing. The consumer need varies from community to community and the population we serve downtown. Industry demands change quickly. Flexible development codes would be a benefit so that market can respond quickly to these changes.
- Vacant space may offer affordable space for start-up businesses. This area may need to be look into further by the consultants.
- Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) projections show growth demand for

office space over the 20 year planning period. Based on current over supply of office space countywide and its impact on demand, we should continue discussion of how to address.

John Owen from MAKERS Consultant Group presented a refinement of three land use and urban design scenarios:

Mr. Owen explained the reason we are doing this is to explore different ideas in regards to land use, street improvements, services and urban design. The objective is not to select one scenario but to determine what is liked or disliked in each scenario. Then take the items that are favored and start to put the pieces together into an overall structure. All the scenarios have a strong historic core, building on assets, economic value, housing and street improvements.

He reviewed each of the following:

Scenario 1 VISIT - Downtown as a regional focus

Scenario 2 LIVE - Lively Livable Neighborhoods

Scenario 3 WORK - Thriving Economy

Discussion - Mr. Owen and Staff responded to comments and questions from the group:

- A result of this study will be a parking study to follow. This process will help guide the process for the parking study. The goal is a parking study would be followed after the land use process has been completed.
- A shared street is shared by vehicles and pedestrians, it doesn't necessarily have a lot of traffic but is very accessible.
- Examples of public facilities would be ultimately something that would serve the community such as: library, swimming pool or recreation center.
- There is no difference in meaning when referring to the word scenario or alternative in this study.
- Identification of districts will have more focus in future meetings.
- Workgroup, Staff and Consultants were all involved in the development of these three scenarios.
- A request to label the assets was made and will be provided at the next meeting.
- The Port plans need to be taken into consideration when planning development between the Children's Museum to downtown.
- When considering trails transportation use will be taken into consideration in addition to recreation use.
- Sea level rise will be considered when planning development along the waterfront.
- Acknowledge the community's concerns and clearly inform them of steps being taken to alleviate their concerns.
- Consider housing the Thurston County Courts in downtown.
- Consider high end residential development on the isthmus.

**The work session was completed.**

**4. MEETING WRAP UP**

Mr. Owen announced the next meeting of the DTS Stakeholder Work group will be on February 3, 2016 and the next public workshop will be on February 20, 2016.

Ms. Dahlen indicated staff and consultants will create a log of "ongoing and upcoming" items and their status within the process.

Ms. Buckler reminded everyone about taking the online survey, which will be available until January 17, 2016. She indicated that so far over 1600 surveys have been received.

**5. ADJOURNMENT 8:30 p.m.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.