

CHARTER - DRAFT

Technical Work Group (TWG) for Downtown Design Guideline Update

February 2017

PURPOSE

Make recommendations to staff and consultants for preparing a new set of Downtown design guidelines that integrate and address topics necessary to implement the Downtown Strategy and Comprehensive Plan. The group's perspectives and ideas will add to project objectives, evaluation of existing and proposed guidelines and the City's understanding of how design requirements impact project outcomes and costs.

The design guideline update will include measures that influence site design, building orientation, massing, architecture and other details, as well as historic preservation and view protection. A scope summary is on the last page.

ROLES/TASKS

- Help develop and review updates to Downtown design guidelines
- Receive, discuss and respond to information and analysis shared before and during meetings with thoughtful insights, perspectives and ideas
- Review comments and information provided during the public process
- Bring an experienced perspective and participate in a constructive manner in the discussion of viable alternatives, creative solutions and potential trade-offs
- Work group members are encouraged to attend and participate in other public meetings during the process
- No formal decision-making role. Input from the work group will be included into specific recommendations to City advisory commissions, and then to City Council.

MEMBERSHIP

The following is a list of desired characteristics for work group members:

- Experience in the fields of real estate development, construction, architecture, landscape architecture, historic preservation or similar field – and/or-experience in local community affairs. (These criteria are desirable to balance the TWG but not required.)
- An interest in Downtown's design quality and livability.
- Good communication skills and ability to listen to and work well with others
- Ability to bring new views and information to other work group members
- Reliable attendance

Members will be sought who can represent or have knowledge of the following perspectives:

- 1-2 Design Review Board members
- 1-2 Heritage Commission members
- Parks and Recreation Committee member
- Developer/financer/commercial broker(s)
- Architect(s)
- Resident (southeast Downtown neighborhood interest preferred)
- Citizen at large
- City plan review staff

The work group will also include 1-2 members of the Olympia Design Review Board and 1-2 members from the Olympia Heritage Commission. Two of these three members will serve as chair and vice-chair to facilitate meetings and work with staff to create meeting schedules and agendas.

MEETING FREQUENCY

The Group will meet generally once per month for approximately seven months. If needed, the Chairs may assign 'homework' of members between meetings in order to achieve the roles/tasks of the group.

DOCUMENTATION

An Administrative Assistant from City staff will take meeting notes and provide them to all members. The notes will be primarily for the TWG and planning team's use as a way to capture comments and allow the TWG to refer back to previous discussions.

COMMUNICATION

Staff and work group members will communicate between meetings as needed by e-mail. A list of members and their e-mail addresses will be shared at the first meeting.

STAFF & CONSULTANT SUPPORT

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Community Planning & Development
John Owen, MAKERS architecture and urban design

Staff has overall responsibility for outlining the purpose of the Work Group and providing guidance. This includes reviewing the group's feedback to inform potential staff recommendations to City advisory commissions and City Council.

Scope Summary

A preliminary scope for the update includes:

- Organize into one section so that applicants can access relevant guidelines in one place
- Allow for flexibility, but be focused and clear; not onerous
- Discuss and update the existing use and definitions of “shall” and “should” to help better meet objectives
- Reinforce unique character areas. While basic standards should apply throughout Downtown, some variation should be applied to enhance character areas.
- Various updates to address site planning and design, pedestrian access, amenities, open space, and building design
- Craft new mixed use guidelines
- Improve historic guidelines, including incorporate Secretary of the Interior standards that apply to alterations of existing historic structures
- Update requirements for nonresidential storefronts, considering essential locations where these should be required and design to promote active streetscapes
- Consider doing away with, or simplifying ratios (as currently in Pedestrian Street Overlay) as these are difficult to apply on smaller sites
- Incorporate more Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (C-TED) measures
- Update view protection guidelines with moderate measures to protect and enhance three important views, from: West Bay Park to Mt. Rainer, Deschutes Parkway to Mt. Rainier, and East Bay Overlook to the Capitol Dome
- Illustrate with photos, sketches, and diagrams, as necessary to visually explain the provisions and provide a variety of ways to meet the standards. Where used as good examples, make sure they are exemplary development examples consistent with the desired character for Downtown. Make sure the graphics are internally consistent.

More detail is provided in the document **Analysis and Recommendations for Upgrading Downtown Olympia’s Design Guidelines and Historic Preservation Program**

The scope does not include streetscape design measures, which will be covered in a subsequent update to the Engineering Development and Design Standards (EDDS); nor does it include park improvements which are guided by a separate Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan. This update will not result in changes to the design review process, such as to the joint DRB/OHC process; however this process may further examine whether that is necessary and what it would take resource-wise to make a recommended change.