



Amy Buckler, Associate Planner 360.570.5847

[Handouts]

Have you ever wondered what the downtown plan is?

Here's how I like to think of it ...

- It's a strategic plan that will describe existing and forecasted conditions, priorities, and the tools and resources we will connect use to help achieve downtown goals
- It will likely result in some bigger actions we can take over 5 years, and may also result in changes to existing programs
- There may even be immediate actions - or milestones - as part of the process depending on the scope set by Council over the next several months

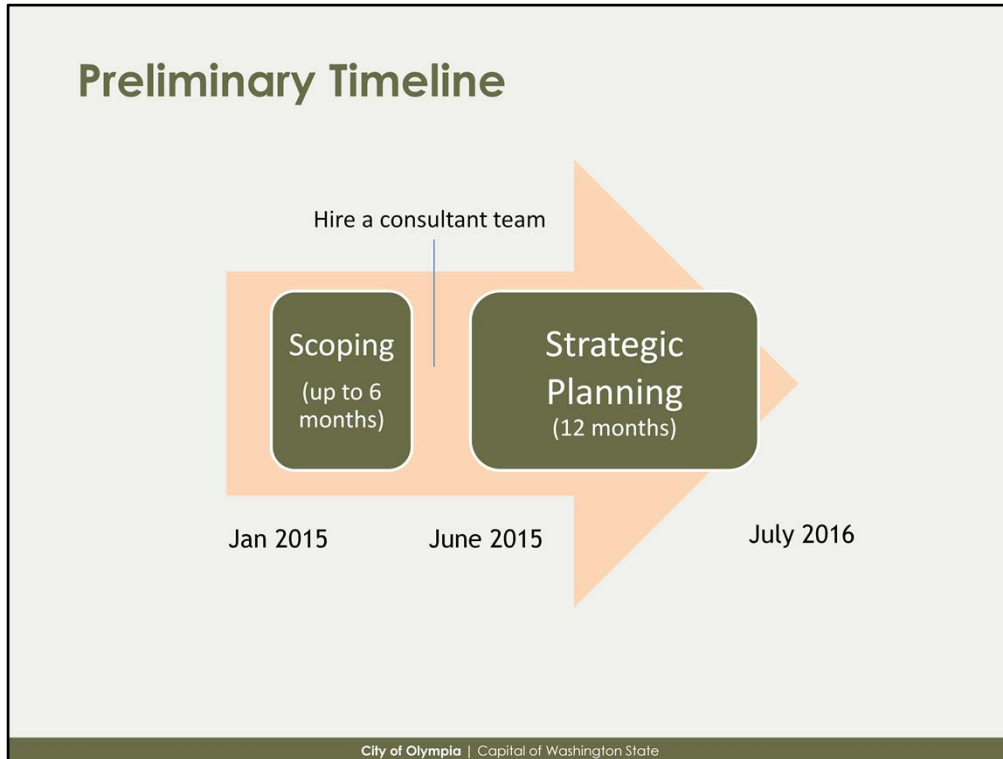
Plan Relationships



City of Olympia | Capital of Washington State

Have you ever wondered how the downtown strategic plan relates to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Community Renewal Area (or CRA) Plan?

- Both the CRA and the downtown strategic plan will implement the Comprehensive Plan (CP), but at different levels.
 - The DT Plan will look holistically at the downtown area (or perhaps specific district(s) resulting in a strategy of actions
 - Whereas the CRA will implement the CP through public/private partnership(s) with specific project(s)
 - As Downtown Planning and the CRA process take place simultaneously, information from each process can inform the other.
 - This can help us maintain an action-oriented approach that is current on public input and market forces.



- Two distinct elements of the downtown strategic plan are 1) Scoping and 2) Planning.
- During scoping, we'll lay the groundwork for the planning process: the topics of focus, roles, public participation, etc.
- Scoping may take less time – TBD

- Although not yet decided by City Council, staff anticipates that \$250,000 from the 2014 year end savings may be applied to the downtown planning effort.
- Staff also anticipates the need for a consultant team to work with the City in developing the plan once the scope is determined.

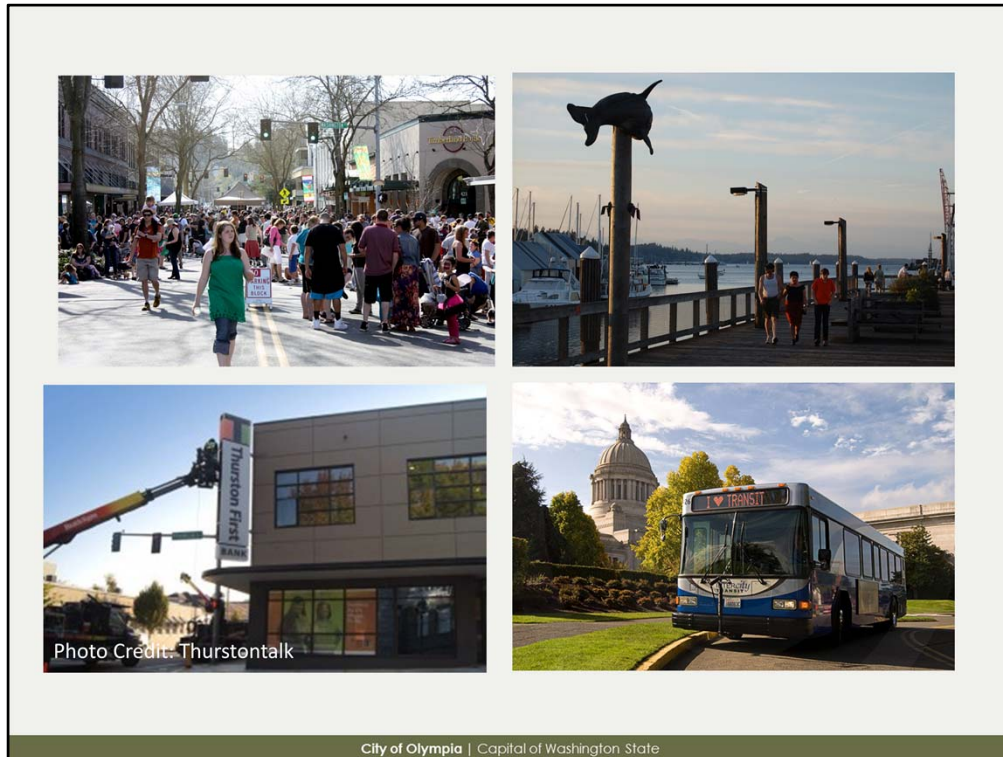


MYTHS

1. We have no Vision for Downtown
2. We have no Plan for Downtown
3. All prior plans have resulted in nothing



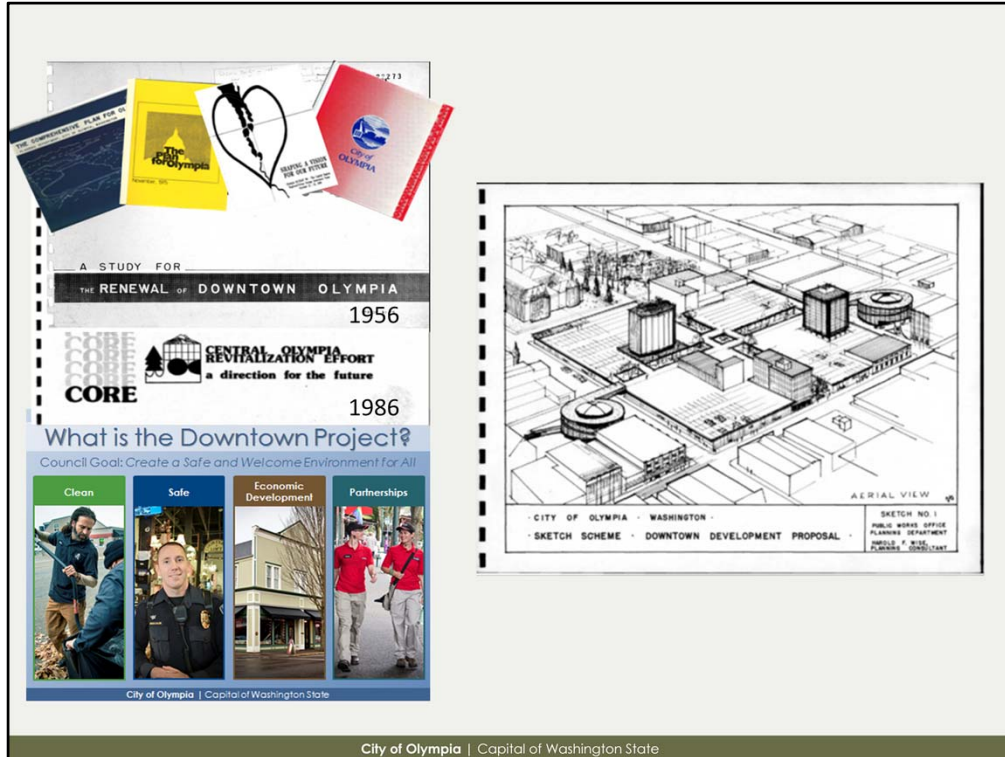
Mythbusting



[Hand out comp plan policies, vision document]

There is a vision for downtown expressed in our Comp Plan – in a nutshell:

- Downtown will have a special focus because it is the heart of our community
- Regional destination and employment center
- Absorb 5,000 more residents over next 20 years
- Compact with urban building forms and designs that provide for ...
- A vibrant, attractive, pedestrian-friendly, safe and clean place
- Protected from sea level rise
- Pristine natural environment with lots of trees and public access to the waterfront
- Other elements of the Comp Plan (i.e., environment, utility, economy chapters) also apply to downtown



The earliest plan for downtown we can find is from 1946. Since then, we've produced over 90 plans and studies that relate to downtown Olympia. Our downtown plan has evolved over the past 75 years. Over this time, our region has grown steadily, our lifestyles, the landscape and market forces have changed and our plans have had to adapt. [See timeline]

Actions Since 1980

Washington Center for Performing Arts
Percival Landing Boardwalk
Olympia/Senior Center
Heritage Block Fountain
Olympia Farmers Market
Downtown Main Street Program
Percival Park
Urban Design Standards
1% Public Art Ordinance
Historic Preservation Ordinance
Downtown Streetscape Strategy
Multi-Family Tax Exemption
Lower Downtown Impact Fees
Parking Exemption Area
Heritage Park
The DASH Bus
Art Installations
Pedestrian Interference Ordinance
Parking & Business Improvement Area

Since 2007 ...

Hands On Children's Museum
LOTT Wet Center
East Bay Plaza
New City Hall
Percival Landing Reconstruction - Phase I
Flower Baskets - Benches - Murals
Wayfinding Signs
Downtown Ambassadors
Walking Patrol
Drug Free Zone
Alcohol Impact Area
Artesian Commons
Alley & Sidewalk Improvements

City of Olympia | Capital of Washington State

But here's some examples of things we did accomplish ...

1979 R/udat Design Process was a game-changer – many advances

In 1991, Design Strategy - includes many best practices for a compact, well connected, pedestrian-oriented downtown that apply to

Both city construction projects in the right-of-way, and private development projects



City of Olympia | Capital of Washington State

Partnerships have been and will continue to be the key to our success
 Port of Olympia:

- Was involved in all of these developments
- All of these public plazas are on Port land
- Updating their Real Estate Development Plan in 2015
- Another huge partner is the State – working on Capitol Campus Master Plan in 2015
- Opportunity to coordinate with their processes next year
- Downtown Project would be unsuccessful without partners Parking Business and Improvement Area (PBIA) & the Olympia Downtown Association



A lot of positive change comes by way of private investment, including the work of private developers, such as Walker John who renovated the old State Dept. of Personnel into a mixed retail and apartments – finally we seeing our housing goals materialize

Seeing more private investment:

Multi-family getting financed

Rehabilitation of existing buildings is in high demand

MYTHS

1. No Vision

2. No Plan

3. No Results

4. Downtown keeps getting worse

BUSTED



Where Are We Now?



Pages removed from old Comp Plan include:

- A Vision Statement
- “Existing” Conditions
- Market Opportunities
- “A Plan for Downtown”
 - Downtown subarea goals & policies
 - An Implementation Strategy
 - Urban Design Analysis
 - Design Review goals
 - Downtown Child Care Services
 - Principles for a landscaping ordinance
 - Area-Wide Pedestrian Plan
 - Downtown Housing



Have the Comp Plan

- This is the boundary of downtown as described in the Comp Plan – a little different than CRA
- Also a district map in the Comp Plan- There have been other suggestions, and could potentially be considered during scoping

Invite Leonard Bauer, Deputy Planning Director to speak about what other cities are doing

Other Cities' Best Practices

Bellingham

- Recognize districts but also that they overlap
- Understand market indicators
- Integrate implementation strategies



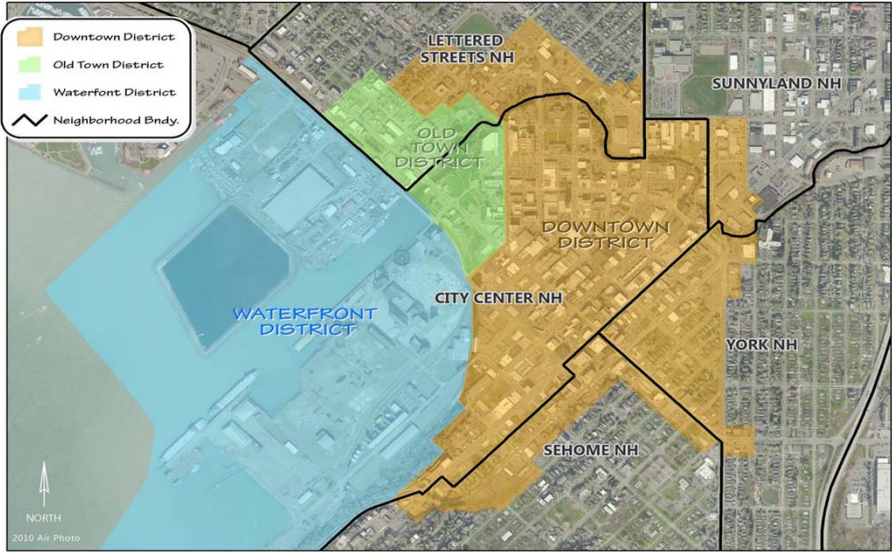
Bellingham plan embraces and acknowledges past plans and their accomplishments

Uses districts but acknowledges they are not precise boundaries and overlap

Downtown – Part of the “City Center Neighborhood”

Downtown, along with portions of the Old Town and Waterfront Districts, comprise the City Center Neighborhood. The City Center Neighborhood Plan unites the three districts under a common planning umbrella, while the goals, policies, and regulations for each are contained within the plans and development codes for each individual area.

Bellingham



Other Cities' Best Practices

Yakima Retail Strategy

- Local Market Indicators
- Site Analysis
- Competitive Retail Review
- Demand Analysis
- Project Positioning & Development Opportunity
- Retail Strategy & Implementation

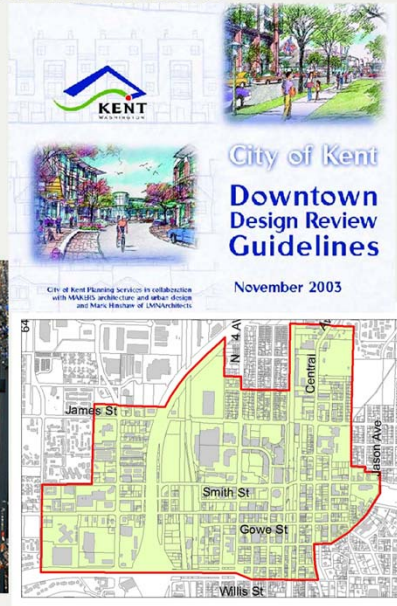


Mayor Welcome and overview

Other Cities' Best Practices

Kent

- Up-front SEPA techniques
- Focus Design Guidelines



Mayor Welcome and overview

MYTHS

5. We can master plan for each property downtown.
6. We can revitalize downtown without private sector investment.

BUSTED

City of Olympia | Capital of Washington State

We're not going to plan on a parcel-specific level for all of downtown
Many private properties – would not be legal or expedient.

City only has direct control in public realm – streetscapes, land use, development and design standards, public placemaking, parking
Some codes may need to be updated – anticipate code amendments as an action within this 5 years



7. This strategy will solve all our problems

8. The world stops while we plan

9. If we plan, it will happen ... instantly

City of Olympia | Capital of Washington State

Gonna wrap it up soon, but a few more myths to bust:

123 4th – Over a Decade in the Making



Plaza other than Sylvester Park took more than a decade
East Bay Partnership was challenging, risky
Here's an example that took 12 years

- 2002 – Council directs staff
- 2004 – City puts out Request for Qualifications
- 2007 – Developer gets land use permit
- Economy Tanks and developer loses financing
- 2013 – New developer/owner resubmits for permits
- 2014 – Construction begins (Completes in 2015)

Won't solve global inequality, a national economic crisis or a heroin epidemic – we can make some positive change

It takes a long time to implement and its not always easy –

We are always planning and implementing – don't want plans to sit on the shelf

Community development is dynamic

MYTHS

7. This strategy will solve our problems

8. The work is done while we plan

9. If we plan, it will happen ... instantly

BUSTED



Many issues have been discussed as potential topics for downtown planning – far more than the City’s timeline and budget can support within a year and a half. As part of scoping, the Council will prioritize and choose a vital few topics to be the immediate planning focus.

- We have to prioritize
- what is realistic and vital



Many issues have been discussed as potential topics for downtown planning – far more than the City’s timeline and budget can support within a year and a half. As part of scoping, the Council will prioritize and choose a vital few topics to be the immediate planning focus.

- We have to prioritize
- what is realistic and vital

More Scoping Conversation ... January

Staff can bring options for:

- Timeline
- Topics
- Planning Boundary
- Communication and public involvement plan
- Roles of advisory boards and other stakeholders
- Environmental Analysis (SEPA)
- Relationships/connections to other related planning efforts

Later: Potential Roles for a consultant team



- I'll be back in January with some options.
- The LUEC may want to consider formerly branding this process in a manner that helps to convey the purpose and energy of this effort.
- Getting preliminary input from advisory boards

Draft Principles for the Scoping Process

- Led by the Council or Council Land Use & Environment Committee
- Maintains a planned timeline
- Prioritizes - vital and realistic focus
- Results in a clear scope for the planning process that is:
 - Tangible and action-oriented
 - Takes a holistic approach
 - Includes a realistic timeline, roles, anticipated outcome(s) etc...
 - Draws on previous planning efforts - not recreate them
- Uses clear, consistent, visual & data-driven information
- Has a strong public participation/communication plan that:
 - Is consistent with Comp Plan Public Participation Plan
 - Builds and maintains the momentum of public engagement
 - Involves and builds public & stakeholder partnerships
 - Uses diverse and creative methods to reach various stakeholders
 - Articulates the relationship with other related efforts
- Compliments other related efforts, and vice versa
- Educates
- Considers lessons learned from previous planning efforts
- Manages expectations and addresses false assumptions

City of Olympia | Capital of Washington State

- I'll be back in January with some options.
- The LUEC may want to consider formerly branding this process in a manner that helps to convey the purpose and energy of this effort.
- Getting preliminary input from advisory boards

Thank You



City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development

Lessons Learned from Successful Downtown Plans

- Need a clearly-articulated purpose that drives a focused scope and direction
 - Invest in an accurate picture of current conditions and market opportunities
 - “District” approach can be helpful for pedestrian-oriented activity areas
 - Can promote a consistent design or “feel” – creates a “destination”
 - Don’t be too prescriptive in defining districts’ functions– may stifle market response
 - City only has direct control in public realm – streetscapes, land use, development and design standards, public placemaking, parking
 - “Catalyst projects” in public realm alone may not be enough to achieve goals
 - Private and non-profit partners are instrumental to success
 - Explore all potential tools for implementation
 - Be explicit about city and partner responsibilities, timelines and costs
 - Targeted marketing can be very effective
-

Downtown Plans Reviewed

Out of State

Racine WI (2005)
Ventura CA (2007)
Milwaukie OR (2013)
Grand Junction CO (2009)

Larger Cities in WA

Bothell (2010)
Bellingham (2014)
Kent (2013)
Shoreline (2011)
Yakima (2013)

Comparable-Sized Cities in WA

Bremerton (2007)
Burien (2000 & 2002)

Smaller Cities in WA

Walla Walla (2004)



Land Use and Environment Committee

DOWNTOWN PROJECT PHASE I TASK LIST:

- Establishment of the Downtown Ambassador Program
- Establishment of Best Management Practices for Bars/Taverns
- Establishment of an Alcohol Impact Area
- Installation of two parklets
- Art installation at Artesian Well
- Installation of two tree benches
- Survey of Downtown Users
- Review of Pedestrian Interference Ordinance





DOWNTOWN PROJECT PHASE II TASK LIST:

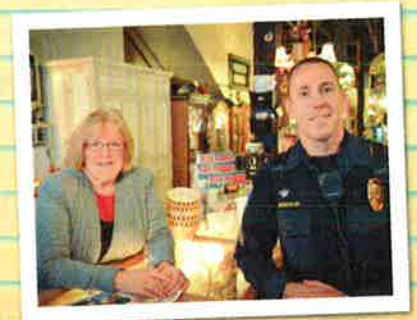
1. CLEAN:

- Expansion of Clean Team
- Downtown Olympia Graffiti Abatement Coordination
- Expansion of Downtown Pedestrian Recycling Program



2. SAFE:

- Expansion of Downtown Ambassadors
- Downtown Proactive Policing
- Coordinating Social Services
- Expanding Restroom Availability
- Alcohol Impact Area (AIA) Implementation
- Formalize Bars/Taverns BMP Review Guidelines
- Strengthen Downtown Neighborhood Association



3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Downtown Marketing - "Telling our story"
- Parking Makeover
- Formation of Community Renewal Area
- Marketing Department of Fish & Wildlife Property
- Facilitating Housing Construction
- Council Gives Direction on Downtown Master Plan
- Washington Center for Performing Arts Repairs



4. PLACEMAKING:

- Artesian Court Design Council Presentation
- Alley Improvement Project Proposal
- Alley Naming Project
- Installation of more Parklets
- Installation of more Tree Benches
- Public Art Installation (PBIA Funded)



From: Amy Buckler
Sent: Monday, December 08, 2014 12:41 PM
To: Planning Commission
Cc: Leonard Bauer; Keith Stahley; Steve Hall; Brian Wilson
Subject: Does the Comp Plan Update Express a Vision for Downtown?

Dear Commissioners,

A few people have raised concern about whether or not the Comprehensive Plan Update (final draft) expresses a vision for downtown that can guide us through CRA and the upcoming downtown strategic planning effort. The concern is raised because of the 26 pages that were removed from the existing Comp Plan with a proposal they be adopted separately from the Update.

I have done a thorough search of the Update's final draft and believe it does express a vision for downtown. I've attached the excerpts; note, I do not include every general reference to downtown, maps or photo captions – in sum:

Downtown is and will be:

- The heart of the regional community
- Vibrant, Attractive, Safe, Pedestrian-friendly
- Protected from sea-level rise
- A regional center for state government, commerce and industry & public and private investment

Downtown will (in some cases, continue to) have:

- A special focus (subarea/downtown plan)
- More residents (25% of growth / 5,000 more people)
- At least 15 units and 25 employees per acre
- Amenities, attractive public spaces, green space, publically-accessible waterfront
- Thriving local businesses
- Frequent transit service
- Market rate and affordable housing (including mixed use and single-room occupancy units)

RE: Downtown, City will:

- Phase development outward from the downtown core
- Work with Capitol Campus and Port of Olympia to integrate planning
- Collaborate with public and private partners to meet goals and finance infrastructure needs
- Invest in market-rate housing and other "up-front" improvements that increase economic productivity, walkability and transit
- Encourage development that caters to a regional market
- Aggressively market downtown and Promote the Downtown Historic District
- Create attractive entry corridors to downtown
- Seek opportunities to enhance public spaces and town squares, including decorative/green landscaping
- Provide for private use of public lands and rights-of-way when in the best interest of the community.
- Reduce parking space requirements, support parking structures and locate parking on the edges
- Have design standards that:

- Require urban, compact, pedestrian-oriented designs
- Enhance historic architecture
- Recognize distinct areas
- Retain selected public views of the Capitol Dome
- Establish and promote a theatre district
- Prepare preliminary studies for priority development sites (such as with the CRA)
- Encourage colleges to establish a physical presence downtown
- Identify potential tools, partnerships and resources to deal with contamination
- Consider:
 - Increasing allowed densities
 - A geographically-influenced impact fee
 - Incentives to address specific challenges

The 26-pages removed from the existing Comp Plan outline the following:

- A Vision Statement (*similar to the above concepts*)
- Existing Conditions
- Market Opportunities
- “A Plan for Downtown”
 - Downtown Sub Area (Districts) goals & policies (*depending on scope, may be updated as part of upcoming downtown work*)
- An Implementation Strategy
 - Urban Design Analysis (*informed our existing design standards*)
 - Design Review goals (*same policies are in the CPU– but “Plain Talked” – backbone of our existing design standards*)
 - Downtown Child Care Services (*now in the Code or obsolete*)
 - Principles for a landscaping ordinance (*now in the Code*)
 - Area-Wide Pedestrian Plan (*now the Downtown Streetscape Strategy*)
 - Downtown Housing (*new targets included in the CPU*)

In sum, I believe there is a vision for downtown in the Comp Plan Update. The 26-page excerpt is more of the strategic approach, including some stuff that has or could carry over and other stuff that needs to be updated.

Is all of this captured in an easy, jazzy format that can be used as a downtown specific communication tool? – No, not really, but perhaps that will be an outcome of the downtown strategic plan – some Councilmembers have expressed interest in such an outcome, so we’ll see when they decide the scope.

Please let me know if you have any questions,

Amy Buckler

Associate Planner
 City of Olympia
 601 4th Ave E
 Olympia, WA 98502
 (360) 570-5847

This email is subject to public disclosure

Downtown Excerpts from the Final Draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update

Note:

- *Other goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan not specifically addressing downtown may apply on other grounds. For example, environmental protection standards and other programs and services that apply citywide (e.g., parks, utilities)*
- *Policies of the Shoreline Management Program will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan before the 2016 update deadline.*
- *The Economy chapter has a great deal more background text regarding downtown than is included here.*

[Start of Comp Plan Text]

Forward

In order to meet our vision of a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly **downtown**, the City will need flexibility to respond to changing market conditions over the 20-year planning period. (1st paragraph)

Introduction Chapter

Sea Level Rise

Over the next twenty years, sea level rise will continue to be a key challenge facing Olympia, and therefore a key priority. As the challenge unfolds, the City of Olympia is prepared to respond thoughtfully and competently to the threat of flooding in **downtown**. As the heart of our City, **downtown** can and will be protected. *(Several more mentions of downtown in this section ...)*

Other Key Challenges

Integrate Shoreline Management Program (SMP): Olympians value ample public space along their marine shoreline and waterways to balance growth **downtown**.

Revitalize Our **Downtown:** Located on Puget Sound and along the Deschutes River, **downtown** is the site of many historic buildings and places, and is home to many theatres, galleries, and unique shops as well as the State Capitol. At the same time, Olympia's **downtown** has yet to become the walkable, comfortable place the community desires. To add vibrancy while retaining our desired small town feel will require more **downtown** residents, better amenities, attractive public spaces, green space, thriving local businesses, and integrated standards for design.

Address Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise: Sea-level could rise in Olympia by 50 inches or more over the next century due to warming of the oceans and settling land. This will put much of Olympia's **downtown** at risk of flooding since it lies only one to three feet above the current highest high tides. Over the next 20 years, the City will continue to explore how to address sea-level rise impacts on our **downtown**.

Community Vision/Values Chapter

Our Natural Environment

... As a result of this cooperative effort, Olympia will enjoy a dense tree canopy that will beautify our **downtown** and neighborhoods ...

Land Use

*Olympians value ... a walkable and comfortable **downtown**; ... public spaces for citizens in neighborhoods, **downtown**, and along our shorelines.*

... Through collaboration with other agencies and partners, our urban waterfront will be a priceless asset, eventually running along the Deschutes River from Tumwater's historic buildings, down past Marathon and Heritage parks to Percival Landing and the Port Peninsula ...

... Capitol Way will be a busy and historic boulevard linking the waterfront and **downtown** to the Capitol Campus. By creating plazas, expanded sidewalks, and public art in public places, we will stimulate private investment in residential and commercial development, increasing **downtown** Olympia's retail and commercial vitality ...

Transportation

... Sidewalks, both in compact, mixed-use neighborhoods and **downtown**, will encourage walkers to stop at shops and squares in lively centers near their homes ...

... Parking lots for car commuters will be located on the edges of **downtown**, hidden from view by offices and storefronts ...

Economy

... The City's investment in the **downtown** will encourage market-rate housing, many new specialty stores and boutiques, and attract visitors to places such as Percival Landing, the Hands on Children's Museum, and our many theatre and art venues ...

Public Services

... By adopting "affordable" housing program criteria, the City will help assure all residents can meet their basic housing needs ... this would contribute to reducing the cost of City police and social services and make the **downtown** more attractive for businesses and visitors ...

Land Use Chapter

Introductory Text

Our community seeks to:

- ... Phase urban development and facility extension outward from the **downtown** area
- ... Focus higher residential densities **downtown**, along urban corridors, and near neighborhood centers.

We envision:

- ... A process for exploring the unique possibilities of each area with special attention given to **Downtown** ...

General Land Use Area

... Development will be carefully designed to integrate with the adjacent transportation system, and with key features such as **downtown** and the hospitals.

PL1.7 Enable frequent transit service, support housing, utilize existing infrastructure, provide public improvements and concentrate new major shopping, entertainment and office uses **downtown**, in the medical services area of Lilly Road, near the Capital Mall, and in the urban corridors.

Urban Design, Historic Structures and Built Form

... Study participants particularly valued Olympia's waterfront, **downtown**, the Capitol Campus, the older established neighborhoods, and views of the Olympic Mountains and the Black Hills ... Specifically, they liked the portions of **downtown** where buildings form a continuous edge along the street, where it is interesting to walk, and where awnings protect people from the rain.

PL6.7: Create attractive entry corridors to the community and neighborhoods, **especially downtown** and along **urban corridors**; to include adopting design standards and installing significant special landscaping along community-entry corridors.

PL12.3 Seek opportunities to create or enhance town squares framed by commercial or civic buildings, pocket parks, plazas and other small public or private spaces in **downtown** or other high-density areas.

PL11.5 Encourage the efficient use and design of commercial parking areas; reduce parking space requirements (but avoid significant overflow into residential areas); support parking structures, especially **downtown** and in urban corridors; and designate streets for on-street parking where safe.

PL14.1 Establish eight gateways with civic boulevards that are entry/exit pathways along major streets to **downtown** Olympia and the Capitol.

PL14.2 Concentrate housing into three high-density Neighborhoods: **Downtown** Olympia, Pacific/Martin/Lilly Triangle; and the area surrounding Capital Mall. Commercial uses directly serve high-density neighborhoods and allow people to meet their daily needs without traveling outside their neighborhood. High-density neighborhoods are highly walkable. At least one-quarter of the forecasted growth is planned for **downtown Olympia**.

Focus Areas

... In addition to the focus areas described below, the City works with the State of Washington in its preparation of the [Capitol Campus Master Plan](#) and with the Port of Olympia in its planning of its properties including the Port peninsula. Included in these efforts is the continuing goal of integrating these areas with **downtown** Olympia ...

PL15.1 Maximize the potential of the Capital Mall area as a regional shopping center by encouraging development that caters to a regional market, by providing pedestrian walkways between businesses and areas; by increasing shopper convenience and reducing traffic by supporting transit service linked to **downtown**; by encouraging redevelopment of parking areas with buildings and parking structures; and by encouraging multifamily housing.

Downtown and other Neighborhoods

Downtown Olympia

A community needs a "heart." For our community, the **downtown** area performs this role, not just for our city, but for the larger region. **Downtown** Olympia thus deserves and receives special attention. A city with a thriving **downtown** has more potential for bolstering community spirit and providing a healthy local economy.

Olympia's **downtown** includes over 500 acres. It is bounded generally by the State Capitol Campus, Capitol Lake, Budd Inlet, and Plum Street. This area includes Olympia's retail core, State and other office uses, and access to the waterfront, and is the center of most major transportation links. It is the social, cultural, and economic center of the area.

Downtown will continue to be an attractive place to live, work and play. Future office, retail and residential development will support **downtown's** role as a regional center and home of state government, commerce, and industry. Given its history, physical location and established identity, **downtown** Olympia will continue to be the heart of Olympia and the region.

GL17: Regional urban activity is centered in **downtown** Olympia.

PL17.1: Adopt a **Downtown** Plan addressing - at minimum - housing, public spaces, parking management, rehabilitation and redevelopment, architecture and cultural

resources, building skyline and views, and relationships to the Port peninsula and Capitol Campus.

PL17.2: Include public art and public spaces in the **downtown** landscape.

PL17.3: Through aggressive marketing and extra height, encourage intensive **downtown** residential and commercial development (at least 15 units and 25 employees per acre) sufficient to support frequent transit service.

PL17.4: Encourage development that caters to a regional market.

PL17.5: Coordinate with State of Washington and Port of Olympia to ensure that both the Capitol Campus plan and Port peninsula development are consistent with and support the community's vision for **downtown** Olympia

PL17.6: Landscape the **downtown** with trees, planters and baskets, banners, community gardens and other decorative improvements.

GL18: **Downtown** designs express Olympia's heritage and future in a compact and pedestrian-oriented manner.

PL18.1: Regulate the design of **downtown** development with specific but flexible guidelines that allow for creativity and innovation, enhance historic architecture and recognize distinct areas of downtown, and do not discourage development.

PL18.2: Require that **downtown** development provide active spaces, adequate sunlight and air-flow and minimize 'blank' walls at street level.

PL18.3: Require development designs that favor pedestrians over cars by including awnings and rain protection that blend with historic architecture, create interest, and minimize security and safety risks; development designs should also foster cultural events, entertainment, and tourism.

PL18.4: Provide for private use of public lands and rights-of-way when in the best interest of the community.

PL18.5: Design streets with landscaping, wide sidewalks, underground utilities and a coordinated pattern of unifying details.

PL18.6: Designate 'pedestrian streets' where most of the frontage will have 'people-oriented' activities and street-level buildings will have a high proportion of glass. Prohibit parking lots along these streets, except when preserving scenic views and instead provide surface parking along other streets.

PL18.7: Plant, maintain, and protect **downtown** trees for enjoyment and beauty; coordinate planting, with special attention to Legion Way and Sylvester Park and a buffer from the Port's marine terminal.

PL18.8: Limit drive-through facilities to the vicinity of the Plum Street freeway interchange.

PL18.9: Limit building heights to accentuate, and retain selected public views of, the Capitol dome.

GL19: Downtown's historic character and significant historic buildings, structures, and sites are preserved and enhanced.

PL19.1: Promote the **Downtown** Historic District to provide a focal point of historic interest, maintain the economic vitality of **downtown**, and enhance the richness and diversity of Olympia.

PL19.2: Minimize damage to significant historic features or character during rehabilitation projects.

PL19.3: Design new development and renovations so they are compatible and harmonious with the established pattern, alignment, size and shape of existing **downtown** area.

PL19.4: Incorporate historic buildings into redevelopment projects and restore historic facades

Sub-area Planning

... Twelve planning areas, including **downtown**, are to be established ...

Appendix A – Future Land Use Map Designations (Definitions)

Residential Mixed Use. To provide opportunities for people to live close to work, shopping, and services, this designation provides for high-density multifamily housing in multistory structures combined with limited commercial uses in parts of **downtown**, near the State Capitol Campus, and near urban corridors and other activity centers.

Central Business District. This designation provides for a wide range of activities that make **downtown** Olympia the cultural, civic, commercial and employment heart of the community. A dense mix of housing, pedestrian-oriented land uses and design and proximity to transit make a convenient link between **downtown**, the State Capitol, the waterfront, and other activity centers in the region. The scale, height and bulk of development reinforce **downtown** Olympia's historic character, buildings, places and street layout.

Transportation Chapter

Land Use

GT13: A mix of strategies is used to concentrate growth in the city, which both supports and is supported by walking, biking, and transit.

PT13.1: Consider increasing allowed densities in the **downtown core** and along parts of the urban corridors, while maintaining lower densities in the periphery of the City.

PT13.2: Consider a geographically-influenced impact fee based on costs that would likely incentivize development or redevelopment in the **downtown core** and along parts of the urban corridor.

PT13.3: Consider incentives to address the specific challenges **downtown** redevelopment faces.

PT13.4: Promote infill in close-in neighborhoods and increased land-use density in activity centers and **downtown** to reduce sprawl, car trips, and to make the best use of the existing transportation network.

Downtown and City Center Transportation Issues

"Downtown" is defined as the area bounded by the bridges to the west, Marine Drive to the north, Eastside Street to the east, and Union Avenue to the south. The "City Center" is defined as the downtown the Capitol Campus, and the Port.

City Center traffic levels vary throughout the day. For the most part, no new roadways are proposed here, based on the existing land-use plan and expected development. The area is a well-connected grid-street network that can handle large volumes of traffic, and where plans are in place to provide excellent support to pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. Traffic congestion will continue in the City Center, but the City is focused on moving people and goods instead of accommodating only vehicles.

Some intersections in City Center will continue to be congested during morning and evening rush hours. But because the City Center is a strategy corridor, widening is not an option. Future capacity will come from improvements to walking, biking and transit.

The City works with the Port of Olympia to establish and maintain truck routes between Interstate 5 and the Port's marine terminal, which are now Plum Street, Olympia Avenue and Marine Drive. Any proposals to change these routes must consider, at a minimum, traffic impacts, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, the Port of Olympia, and the potential noise and air quality effects they could have on adjacent properties.

The Port of Olympia's investment in redeveloping the East Bay area since the mid-1990s has created new street connections that improve access and mobility in northeast City Center. The Thurston Avenue-Olympia Avenue connection from East Bay Drive to Jefferson Street has

greatly improved access into the north part of the City Center, and now provides a new east-west route option.

4th and 5th Avenue Corridor Study

In 1991, the City began a multi-stage study of the 4th and 5th Avenue corridors in an effort to improve transportation between the City Center and the Westside. The study looked at ways to reduce congestion and improve access and safety for walking and biking. It also studied how the City could help maintain the livability of nearby neighborhoods, enhance City Center vitality, protect the environment, improve the appearance of the corridor, and improve access for buses and carpools.

The study recommended a new three-lane bridge, roundabouts, and a significantly enhanced street system for walking and biking. This corridor planning was critical to the City's ability to fast-track these projects after the 2001 earthquake and complete them by 2004. A new four-lane bridge to replace the old, two-lane bridge would have been a simple solution to congestion. But the City's decision to build a three-lane bridge kept its commitment to building human-scale street system, while at the same time, reducing congestion.

A three-lane bridge still allows two lanes to exit the downtown, which provided the greatest potential to alleviate congestion that could bring downtown to a standstill.

Additionally, the new roundabouts greatly improved traffic flow in the corridor, reducing delays and collisions – as well as the potential severity of any collision.

Wide sidewalks, flashing light systems for crosswalks, roundabouts, and bike lanes enhanced access for bicyclists and pedestrians. Viewing areas on the bridge, art and a new park in the corridor transformed this transportation facility into a destination itself.

This project -- one of the City's largest and most visible -- demonstrated for the first time its major commitment to providing many travel options for its citizens. And it demonstrated how a transportation project can do more than just move cars. It can enhance the character of a City.

Olympia's Downtown Streetscape Strategy

The 2003 Downtown Streetscape Strategy Report provides a design template for streetscape improvements for Olympia's Downtown. Streetscape improvements will focus on public right-of-way improvements rather than zoning or development standards.

The City expects the strategy will be applied over the long term, through the combined efforts of annual capital improvements, streetscape improvements, and partnerships with other public and private agencies.

East Downtown Streetscape

The east downtown area is defined as the area bounded by Plum Street on the east, Adams Street on the west, State Avenue on the north, and 7th Avenue on the south. A market analysis

indicated that new types of commercial and residential development are becoming feasible in this area.

The 2003 Olympia East Downtown Development Plan calls for east downtown to feature a mix of commercial activities and housing types within a walkable neighborhood setting. Specific streetscape improvements have been defined to help achieve the vision for this district.

Improvements for 4th, State, Cherry, Chestnut, and Legion in the east downtown have been defined and incorporated in the development standards to guide public- and privately-funded improvements to these streets.

Downtown Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC)

In 2007, the City Council established a “Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center” for downtown Olympia with the specific goal of reducing the commute trips of its some 20,000 City Center employees. A dense City Center will help meet the City’s land-use, transportation, environmental, and economic goals. But only by reducing trips will it be able to have an effective transportation network and a dense, vibrant downtown.

Capitol Way Study

In 2005, the City studied the safety and transportation issues along the Capitol Way Corridor from 14th Avenue to Carlyon Avenue. Through a series of workshops, the City asked the community about potential multimodal improvements and to help define the unique historic, environmental, and community values in the corridor.

Many neighborhood residents told the City they were concerned about the history of accidents at the curve south of 25th Avenue, pedestrian crossing safety, vehicle speeds, the lack of a bicycle route, and the impacts of increased traffic volumes. They also identified the historic and neighborhood character elements they wanted preserved in the corridor.

This study explored roadway design options that would help solve problems identified by these residents, including a possible three-lane roadway configuration. The City found, however, that reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes from four to three would increase congestion to an unacceptable level.

In the end, the City developed a four-lane option that addressed some of the safety and mobility concerns expressed by the public.

Utility Chapter

City-Owned Utilities Working Together

... We will need a coordinated effort to protect our **downtown** from the flooding that could result from a sea rise scenario of 50 inches by 2100 ...

Drinking Water On Tap

... The City also provides transmission and distribution of Class A Reclaimed water to customers in a limited area of **downtown** Olympia ...

Rainfall, Runoff & Surface Water

GU11: The City uses best available information to implement a sea level rise management plan that will protect Olympia's **downtown**.

PU11.1: Evaluate different scenarios for sea level rise, including varying magnitudes and time horizons, and develop a progression of adaptation and response actions for each scenario.

PU11.2: Develop plans, cost estimates and financing options for addressing sea level rise that include regulatory, engineering and environmentally sensitive solutions.

PU11.3: Maintain public control of **downtown** shorelines that may eventually be needed to help manage flood water.

PU11.6: Partner with government entities and other key stakeholders, such as, the federal government, State of Washington, LOTT Clean Water Alliance, Port of Olympia, Squaxin Island Tribe, downtown property owners, businesses and residents, environmental groups, and other interested parties.

Waste Resources

Public Health, Arts, Parks & Recreation Chapter

GR3: A sustainable park system meets community recreation needs and Level of Service standards.

PR3.5: Beautify entry corridors to our City and our neighborhoods, giving priority to street beautification **downtown** and along [Urban Corridors](#)

GR8: Arts in Olympia are supported.

PR8.7: Establish and promote a theater and entertainment district in **downtown** Olympia

Economy Chapter

See the opening text of this chapter for more extensive background information. Some points that pertain to downtown:

- As 25 % of the State government workforce retires, there will likely be a demand for more downtown multifamily housing for young workers and seniors and senior-oriented services and activities for the retiring workforce
- Retail is the county's third largest employment sector, but it provides an average living wage that is just under what the City estimates is needed for a single adult in Olympia.
- The Port owns 200 acres along Budd Inlet near Olympia's central business district. The Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, the Port's development plan for its Olympia properties, includes industrial uses in the vicinity of the Marine Terminal, recreational boating uses at the Swantown Marina and Boatyard, and mixed uses in the Market, North Point, and East Bay Districts. Recreational uses are envisioned throughout its mixed-use districts and the Marina. For example, the East Bay District is a significant investment and downtown redevelopment opportunity, home to the Hands On Children's Museum and East Bay Plaza.
- The City should continue to seek opportunities for direct partnerships with the college on program development, capital facilities planning and student housing. A physical presence in our downtown could create opportunities for both the City and the College

Downtown Olympia

Downtown Olympia is a special place. For many years it has served as Thurston County's only **downtown**. It has the only urban waterfront in the region, attracting recreational boaters from throughout Puget Sound. It has the only performing arts center, is the region's banking sector and is the recreational hub for the region.

Downtown Olympia is also home to the state's largest farmers operated farmers' market. The Olympia Farmers' Market serves as a link to a substantial network of small family-owned farms and businesses. The market serves as a tourist attraction and destination and a place for local residents to purchase local food. Farmers Markets have proven to be a good way to foster the development and expansion of locally owned businesses. In recent years small neighborhood markets are beginning to appear in Olympia with the hope of fostering more neighborhood centers and even more accessibility to locally grown and produced products.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings see the streets of **downtown** come alive with theater patrons, diners and live music fans. Recent enhancements such as the Hands on Children's Museum, East Bay Plaza, LOTT Clean Water Alliance's WET Center and Percival Landing reconstruction add to downtown's status as a destination.

The proximity of the Capital Campus to **downtown** creates a strong relationship between the campus and **downtown** that is enhanced by the presence of the Dash Shuttle, an Intercity Transit bus that operates on 10 minute headways. This free link between the **downtown** and the state campus is helpful for **downtown** commerce and a convenience to workers and visitors that come to Olympia to participate in the State Legislative sessions.

Downtown remains a work in progress and the City has invested heavily from both a capital facilities and services perspective. From 2012 to 2014 the City has used an action oriented

program known as the **Downtown** Project to effect change. The **Downtown** Project has included key elements such as enhancing the downtown walking patrol, replacing parking pay stations, creating a **Downtown** Ambassador program, establishing an Alcohol Impact Area, and construction of parklets to name just a few.

The City has initiated a community Renewal Area (CRA) planning process for **downtown**. The Community Renewal Area law was created by the state specifically to give communities the tools that they need in order to help areas such as the downtown move forward. Washington law (RCW 35.81) allows cities to establish a Community Renewal Area through the designation of a geographic area that contains blight and the creation of a Community Renewal Plan for addressing that blight. Many Washington cities have used CRA to develop and implement redevelopment plans, including Vancouver, Shoreline, Everett, Bremerton, and Anacortes.

Olympia's **downtown** is the urban center for the entire region - residents and business owners would all benefit from a more active, vibrant downtown. However, parts of **downtown** are widely recognized as "blighted", with several condemned or obsolete buildings occupying key properties. Soil contamination, excessive amounts of surface parking, soils subject to liquefaction and rising seas also contribute to the blight. Redevelopment is stuck despite the area's unparalleled assets. The City has an interest in improving the **downtown** and enhancing its economic productivity in a manner consistent with the rest of this plan. The creation of a CRA may be one way to accomplish this objective.

In 2013 the City initiated an economic development planning process to consider creating a Community Renewal Area in downtown and to provide an assessment of the broader real estate market. This process resulted in the preparation of two key reports: "Investment Strategy: Olympia's Opportunity Areas" and the Downtown Olympia "Community Renewal Area Feasibility Study". These reports will help to refine the City's approach to economic development over the coming years and underpin the City's Community Renewal Area planning process.

The Investment Strategy report provided a community wide assessment of key redevelopment opportunity areas. In addition to downtown, six geographic areas were examined in detail:

- Kaise/Harrison Potential for neighborhood commercial / mixed-use / retail district on large single-ownership tract
- Olympia Landfill City owned, potential major retail site adjacent to existing major retail area
- Division/Harrison Potential neighborhood center adjacent to established neighborhoods
- Headwaters Large multi-ownership parcel with wetland amenity and infrastructure challenges
- K-Mart Site (currently vacant) on major close-in retail corridor

Downtown Focus Area for Community Renewal Area Planning

The Investment Strategy report recommends that the City manage its development area assets as a portfolio that adheres to the community vision. This approach includes: (1) strategically

investing in infrastructure improvements, such as roadways, streetscape improvements, and property acquisition; (2) making necessary or desired regulatory adjustments, such as zoning changes; and (3) creating partnerships with developers and property owners to generate development returns that remain sensitive to market demand.

The CRA Feasibility Study provides the outline and support materials for the ultimate creation of a CRA in **Downtown** Olympia.

Key findings related to **downtown** from the Feasibility Study include:

- Demand from those users who need to be downtown (such as state government, the Port, and related uses) is not a growing part of the economy.
- The redevelopment hurdle downtown is higher than other locations because of higher land and construction costs.
- Commercial rents are not yet high enough to justify new commercial construction in Downtown Olympia.
- Office rents have decreased as vacancies have increased.
- Retail rents are more stable, but have also decreased.
- Low vacancy rates and modest rent increases for apartments citywide, as well as some anecdotal evidence suggest that there is near-term demand for multifamily housing.
- Over \$100 million of public investment has been made downtown by the City and Port of Olympia in new buildings and parks, including a new City Hall, the Hands On Children's Museum, LOTT Clean Water Alliance offices, East Bay Plaza, and Percival Landing.

Recent capital investments have included:

- Olympia's new City Hall and the reopening of Percival Landing (Phase 1) in 2011, together an investment of over \$60 million.
- In the East Bay area, the LOTT Clean Water Alliance's WET Science Center, East Bay Plaza, and the Hands On Children's Museum are providing more family activities downtown.

Over the next 20 years, Olympia must continue to make judicious "up-front" investments that bring development to targeted areas, using its partnerships as effectively as possible. To keep them affordable, such investments will need to be located in the **downtown**, Investment Strategy Report opportunity areas or Urban Corridors. Projects that "leap-frog" to remote sites outside of our existing infrastructure can be prohibitively expensive to develop.

In addition to the City's work on the Community Renewal Area Olympia has recently established a Section 108 Loan Program. This program leverages the City's annual CDBG Allocation to create a loan pool to promote economic development opportunities within our community. These funds must be used in a manner consistent with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's regulations. Generally these funds can be used to support economic development projects that create jobs for low to moderate income people or support

reinvestment in areas such as **downtown** where low to moderate income people live.

GE3: A vital **downtown** provides a strong center for Olympia's economy.

PE3.1: Support a safe and vibrant **downtown** with many small businesses, great public places, events, and activities from morning through evening.

PE3.2: Support lively and active **downtown** parks and waterfront attractions.

PE3.3: Promote high-density housing **downtown** for a range of incomes.

PE3.4: Protect existing trees and plant new ones as a way to help encourage private economic development and redevelopment activities.

PE3.5: Support continuation of the Dash Shuttle as a means of linking the Capital Campus and **downtown**.

PE3.6: Use tools such as the **Downtown Project, Community Renewal Area downtown plan** and other planning processes and tools to improve the economic and social health of downtown.

GE4: The City achieves maximum economic, environmental and social benefit from public infrastructure.

PE4.6: Economic uncertainty created by site contamination can be a barrier to development in **downtown** and elsewhere in our community; identify potential tools, partnerships and resources that can be used to create more economic certainty for developments by better characterizing contamination where doing so fulfills a public purpose.

PE4.9: Collaborate with public and private partners to finance infrastructure needed to develop targeted commercial, residential, industrial, and mixed-use areas (such as **Downtown** Investment Strategy Report opportunity areas and along Urban Corridors) with water, sewer, electricity, street, street frontage, public parking, telecommunications, or rail improvements, as needed and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

PE6.4: Prepare preliminary studies for priority development sites (such as **Downtown**, Investment Strategy Report opportunity areas or Urban Corridors) in advance, so the City is prepared for development applications, and the process can be more efficient.

PE6.8: Encourage The Evergreen State College, St. Martin's University, and South Puget Sound Community College to establish a physical presence in **downtown**.

PE6.9: Collaborate with hospitals and other health care providers to identify actions the City could take to support their role in ensuring public health and their vitality as a major local employment base and to establish a physical presence in **downtown**

Theater

... The Arts Alliance of Downtown Olympia determined that in 2009, local theaters brought 167,000 people **downtown** to attend more than 500 live performances, primarily in the evenings and Sunday matinees. The industry had a \$3.8 million operating budget, and brought in an estimated \$1.6 million to the community in local pay and benefits.

Public Services Chapter

GS9: New low-income housing is created to meet demand.

PS9.4: Continue to encourage development of single-room occupancy units **downtown**, along urban corridors, and in other areas where high-density housing is permitted. This could include encouraging alliances between public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

