



# Snapshot of Draft Retail Strategy for Downtown

*Downtown — A Vibrant Dynamic Business Environment  
that Attracts People, Activity and Investments*

[olympiawa.gov/DTS](http://olympiawa.gov/DTS)





Olympia's Downtown offers a unique retail environment. Not only is Olympia the Capital City, the historic setting and beautiful waterfront offer a unique experience to those who live, work and visit the area. The Downtown Strategy identifies key opportunities for growth and improvement.

Retail strategies and priorities were shaped by extensive public process. According to a recent market study, retail opportunities in downtown are expected to grow based on estimated regional growth, additional Downtown residents, and potential for increased market capture in select sectors.

While the City has little direct influence on the market, the City and partners can help promote an environment where small businesses can compete and thrive. Partners like PBIA, ODA, Thurston Chamber, EDC, VCB, business owners and others are key to Downtown's success.



## Retail Priorities and Strategies

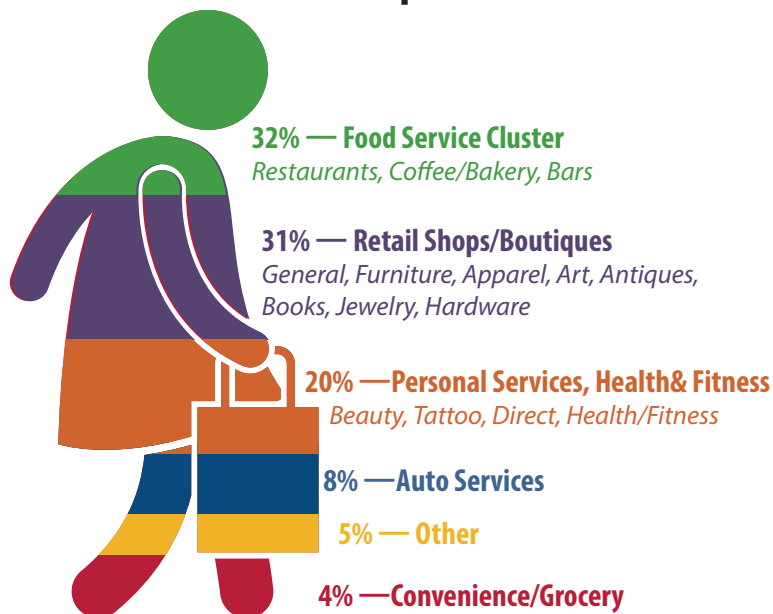
1

**Strengthen Existing & Local Businesses** so Downtown's small businesses can stay and thrive as the local economy grows

Downtown has close to 1,000 businesses that collectively employ about 10,000 people. A majority are small, local businesses composing an eclectic character and charm that contributes to Downtown as a unique shopping and entertainment destination.

40% of downtown businesses comprise the retail+ sector. Offering more than just goods, these businesses offer an experience. There is high potential for increased sales in this sector and other entertainment venues as more people are drawn to Downtown.

### The Downtown Experience



The current distribution of retail space Downtown (by square feet)

### Downtown has a Strong Business Environment

**63%** Businesses identified sales as growing

**30%** Businesses identified as stable

**6%** Businesses identified as declining

**In 2015 - 2016**

**31** Businesses closed

**56** Businesses opened



Sources EDC Business 2015  
Interviews & ODA 2015-16



## Housing Units

1,645 units  
(2015 Inventory)

+ 2,500-3,000 new units  
(projected demand\*)

*\* Does not include temporary housing  
needs such as homeless shelters*

**2013 - 2016:** 299 new  
units added

**2017:** 400 new units  
expected in permitting or  
construction

# 2

**Improve the Streetscape** so that Downtown invites more pedestrian activity, patrons and investors.

Walkability is a proven factor for success in any downtown. Our well-connected grid of sidewalks sets the stage for a truly pedestrian-oriented place, but the quality from place-to-place is inconsistent. Aiming for better connections, the Strategy outlines steps to encourage private investment and a major infrastructure investment. Over the next six years, 5 street segments in the retail core will be transformed to make for a truly spectacular pedestrian experience.

# 3

**Encourage more residents**, so that Downtown offers a more active & urban environment, more patrons and eyes on the street - increasing sense of safety to make downtown more inviting to the broader population.

A Downtown Housing Strategy sets the stage for a full-service neighborhood with a range of housing options.



## Population Now Vs 2035

1,800 residents  
(2010 Census)

+ 5,000 residents  
(Target for 2035)

# 4

**Improve identity & perception** within Thurston County so that Downtown attracts more patrons and investment

Downtown is beloved by many. At the same time oft-cited concerns about parking, homelessness/ street dependency and safety perceptions deter many people. The Strategy directly addresses these concerns, including actions to:

- Update our parking strategy (kicked off fall 2016)
- Convene broad stakeholders to form a coordinated action plan that addresses homelessness and its impacts on Downtown
- Continue clean & safe actions with partners (e.g., Ambassadors, Clean Team, etc.)
- Regular media communication to community about Downtown improvements and positive data



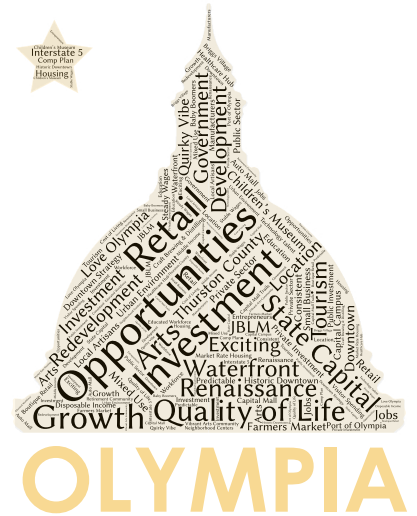
## Connect to other Community & Economic

**Development Efforts** so that Downtown is supported by a strong local economy.

Many interrelated components contribute to a strong local economy (jobs, education, sector diversity, physical infrastructure, etc.) Through partnerships we can strengthen and connect these components to support the long-term viability of our region, and in turn Downtown. Leveraging

- \$180 million of recent public and private investment,
- strong businesses,
- an Economic Development program at the City, and
- numerous tools in place to support business & development,

Downtown is well poised for a bright future.



# 6

**Actively Promote Tourism** so that Downtown is a well-known and sought out destination.

Downtown has a lot to offer tourists. Major attractions like the Hands on Children's Museum, Farmers Market, Capitol Campus, and several theatre & entertainment venues draw hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The Strategy proposes a proactive marketing and branding effort with partners in order to invite additional visitors to stay longer and enjoy more. Several additional actions will enhance our family-friendly waterfront, historic retail core, and dynamic arts and entertainment offerings.



Read more about the Downtown Strategy online at [olympiawa.gov/DTS](http://olympiawa.gov/DTS)