

PBIA Roundtable Comments from July 3, 2019 - Regarding the Downtown Alliance BID proposal

At their meeting on July 3, 2019, the PBIA Board had a roundtable discussion regarding their current thoughts about the Downtown Alliance BID proposal. Councilmember Parshley requested notes from the meeting be made available to City Council for their August 13 study session regarding the BID.

Comments of Support:

- This is about the betterment of downtown, our businesses and our community.
- BID would mean more income being generated to support clean and safe, promotion and beautification.
- BID would be more efficient and streamlined, and capture more downtown interests.
- It's the perfect time to revamp our downtown.
- Need to entice new visitors and people who have left.
- Could be good for downtown as a whole. City has a lot on its plate. Would direct money into downtown in a creative way, in a way that couldn't happen with City in the next 5 years.
- The proposed assessment rates are pretty reasonable.

Comments of Concern:

- Increased assessment will likely be passed onto small businesses through the lease. Concern that many small, independent businesses could not handle the increased assessment (above what they pay now for PBIA.)
- The petition passes with signatures from 60% of assessed value. That puts more power with those who have wealth and holdings in downtown.
- The goal or natural outcome of this BID would be more corporate enterprise. Is that the kind of businesses we want in downtown? Want it said outright.
- Gentrification. Concern that property values, hence lease costs will rise. Appreciate the ODA agreed this is a problem for business improvement districts. We need strategies to avoid it.
- Don't trust that property owners care, they are trying to maximize their profits. This could be an opportunity for further rent gouging.
- Don't trust ODA group to deal with homeless issues appropriately.
- Privatization of the assessment. Having a public entity (City) manage the assessment rather than a non-profit (ODA) is more democratic. PBIA Board is now fully elected by the ratepayers.

Other Considerations:

- Printed materials would be helpful to inform the downtown community about the BID proposal.
- Feel the Alliance has provided a good rundown, just listening at this point.
- It would be good to discuss administration of the proposed BID assessment; it's helpful to talk up front and identify sticky widgets.
- May want to request 2-3 PBIA board members be seated on the transitional board.
- Council might consider replacing PBIA with a citywide business policy advisory board.
- If space is vacant, property owners shouldn't get an out.
- There should be term limits for the BID Board.
- Will there be criteria requiring Olympia residency to sit on the BID Board?