



PBIA Advisory Board

Report on Olympia Creative District

Agenda Date: 8/7/2019
Agenda Item Number: 6.B
File Number: 19-0708

Type: information **Version:** 2 **Status:** Filed

Title

Report on Olympia Creative District

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Report/Briefing only; no action requested.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive the report/briefing.

Report

Issue:

Report on Olympia's new Creative District certification.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

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Background and Analysis:

Olympia received Creative District Certification on June 25, 2019. The Creative District program is a new initiative of the State Arts Commission, and Olympia is only the 3rd city in the state to receive Creative District designation.

Olympia's impetus for a Creative District arose from the 2017 *Downtown Strategy*, which identified and described Character Areas for the downtown. Olympia's new Creative District is comprised of both the Artisan/Tech District and the Entertainment District, as described in the *Strategy*. That work was further supported by the *Arts Cultures and Heritage (ArCH) Profile* completed in 2018, which recommended ways to raise Olympia's profile in these areas and better support a collaboration

among ArCH interests and initiatives in our community.

The Creative District as it exists today has a core area of about 30 blocks and includes over 150 creative industries, including traditional creatives like theaters and art studios, but also encompassing other types of creative businesses like specialty automotive restoration services, a maker of organic wool bedding, a digital prosthetics company that fabricates hand, finger and wrists, local brew pubs, and a costume shop, as examples.

The vision for the district is that it will become a signature for Olympia's identity as a regional hub for the arts, culture, and heritage, offer a resource of affordable space for creative entrepreneurs, artists and performers, become a diversified economic hub, enhance and preserve a distinct sense of place and history through adaptive re-use of underutilized buildings, provide greater access to the arts and creative endeavors across a broad demographic, and contribute to the quality of life in Olympia.

Short term goals include creation of an Advisory Group, marketing and branding, and addressing regulatory barriers to adaptive re-use. Long term, the City hopes to spawn a non-profit entity that will sustain and guide the Creative District's continued evolution.

Attachments:

Power point presentation