



PBIA Advisory Board

Purpose and Priorities

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Title

Purpose and Priorities

Recommended Action

Information only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Discussion of short- and long-term priorities

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Presenter(s):

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Background and Analysis:

Prior to 2024, the Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA) and others were engaged in efforts to initiate a Downtown Improvement District (DID), which would have replaced the PBIA had it passed. On March 6, 2024, Todd Cutts, Executive Director of the ODA presented an update on the DID efforts to the PBIA Advisory Board. During this update, Mr. Cutts shared that the DID failed to gain the support it needed to pass, and that effort had been ended.

Because the DID was widely expected to pass, some work related to the PBIA was delayed. This delay created an unusual schedule for PBIA in 2024. Additionally, a new PBIA staff liaison was assigned to PBIA in 2024. These changes along with the reimagining that occurred around efforts to pass the DID have led to a deeper evaluation of the PBIA, raising questions related to equity, sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency. These questions revealed several issues that indicate some level of change is needed to ensure the PBIA aligns with Council and community priorities and provides the best possible and most equitable benefit for Downtown businesses (PBIA ratepayers). City staff are exploring a range of options and solutions and engaging with the PBIA Advisory Board to better understand Board Member priorities.

In the short-term, the PBIA Advisory Board needs to identify funding priorities for 2024. This discussion will include a review of the 2024 budget as passed. If the PBIA Advisory Board wishes to make changes to the 2024 budget, staff will receive comments to support that update so the Advisory Board can vote in August to recommend an amended budget to Council.

In the long-term, PBIA Advisory Board's perspective on what matters most in terms of Downtown priorities will inform City conversations around options and solutions. Discussions with the PBIA Advisory board are an opportunity for Advisory Board members to share comments with staff and ensure Advisory Board member perspectives are included in discussions that could lead to potential PBIA changes.

Climate Analysis:

The PBIA is an integral part of Downtown. Elements that help to create a vibrant Downtown also help contribute to climate action. Focusing growth and activity into dense neighborhood areas helps reduce dependance on cars, thereby cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

There are several equity issues related to this topic, including some unclear language in OMC 3.62 that may create conditions for bias, a disconnect between the records used for PBIA Advisory Board elections and the records used for assessment invoicing, a fee structure that disproportionately impacts smaller businesses, and significant staffing costs being absorbed by the City for PBIA that are not equitable to all Olympia neighborhoods. In recent months, some ratepayers (particularly in Zones B and C) have expressed concerns around equity as these ratepayers do not feel they benefit from the PBIA at all but are still being assessed.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

This topic is of direct interest to Downtown Olympia and may be of indirect interest to the broader community that experiences Downtown as well as surrounding neighborhoods that are not receiving similar City staffing or investment.

Options:

1. Discuss short- and long-term priorities
2. Do not discuss short- and long-term priorities

Financial Impact:

The PBIA Fund typically generates around \$100,000 annually toward investments that benefit Downtown Olympia. The City contributes approximately \$50,000 in indirect costs to manage the PBIA. While neither of these financial impacts is directly affected by this discussion, both are relevant to the larger conversation of potential changes to PBIA.

Attachments:

2024 Approved Budget
OMC 3.62 ([hyperlink](#))
2024 Draft Work Plan