



Planning Commission

Briefing on the Downtown Strategy

Agenda Date: 5/2/2016
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number: 16-0580

Type: report **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Briefing on the Downtown Strategy

Report

Issue:

Overview of the progress made on the Downtown Strategy and next steps

Staff Contact:

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Community Planning & Development, (360) 570-5847,
abuckler@ci.olympia.wa.us <<mailto:abuckler@ci.olympia.wa.us>>

Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner

Background and Analysis:

Last fall, the City kicked off the public process to form a Downtown Strategy, and hired MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design as consultants. The Downtown Strategy aims to forward our community's vision for downtown. It will establish priority actions for the next 5-6 years; illustrate desired design elements and future conditions; and guide City budgets, work plans and partnerships.

We have just completed step 2 of the process (**attachment 1**), and a framework to guide future steps has taken shape (**attachments 2 & 3**). This marks a major milestone in the process, as we have begun to transition from identifying strategic priorities to identifying specific implementation steps..

The guiding framework chart (**attachment 3**) reflects priorities that have evolved out of the public process and technical analysis thus far. It communicates what tasks are yet to be completed in 2016 and some potential actions for future years that have arisen from the process. The character areas (**attachment 2**) have been well vetted with the community and provide a picture of the unique function and character people would like to see created or enhanced in various areas of downtown - a backdrop that will help us be more objective in our approach to implementation.

Most of the changes that will occur in downtown over the next 6 years will happen through private sector investment. In terms of implementation, the City's role will include: making strategic investments to enhance streets and sidewalks; ensuring our development and design standards align with community vision and are clear and realistic; forming partnerships and/or programmatic actions,

development or business incentives needed in order to help achieve goals.

In accordance with the scope and timeline for the Downtown Strategy, some of the work to form implementation steps has already begun. In particular, the MAKERS team has met with Public Works transportation team and the Stakeholder Work Group to analyze the existing downtown transportation network and identify potential public investment options to enhance streets and sidewalks in downtown. Although more work is still needed to narrow down priority steps and investments for the next six years, a draft street investment map is **attachment 4** and reflects our progress.

Next steps following the study session include:

- **May** - Release of the Downtown Market Analysis, and feasibility analysis of various development types begins
- **May 10 - City Council Briefing.** Any needed clarification based on the study session will be provided
- **May 23 - Urban Design Discussion.** Public meeting to present and discuss building, site and street design concepts (6 p.m., The Olympia Center)
- **June 6 - Workshop #3.** Public meeting to present 3D viewshed analysis and other elements of the strategy
- **Summer 2016** - Public outreach will slow down in order to provide staff and consultants time to concentrate on analysis and preparation of a draft strategy
- **Fall 2016** - Public Open House to present the draft strategy; review and recommendation by Planning Commission, leading to final adoption by City Council

Neighborhood/Community Interests:

There has been extensive public engagement as part of the Downtown Strategy. A Step 2 Summary Report is **attachment 1**, which details the results of Workshop #2 (February 20) and subsequent online survey. The public participation timeline is **attachment 5**. A list of 36 additional presentations or meetings with community groups within the first half of 2016 is **attachment 6**).

Learn more about the Downtown Strategy at olympiawa.gov/DTS
<<http://olympiawa.gov/community/downtown-olympia/downtown-strategy.aspx>>

Options:

Following an overview from staff will be an opportunity for discussion and to ask any questions about the progress of the Downtown Strategy.

Financial Impact:

Briefing is included in the City's \$250,000 budget for formation of a Downtown Strategy. There will be additional costs for implementation steps that emerge.

Attachments:

- 1. Step 2 Summary Report**
- 2. Guiding Framework chart**
- 3. Character Area Map**

- 4. Draft Street Investment Map**
- 5. Public Participation Timeline**
- 6. Additional Outreach**