



Land Use & Environment Committee

Welcome Center Status Report and Update

Agenda Date: 7/21/2016
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Title

Welcome Center Status Report and Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive the update. Briefing only; No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss the Downtown Welcome Center including highlights of performance measures and key objectives as they pertain to desired outcomes of the Welcome Center.

Staff Contact:

Mark Rentfrow, Downtown Liaison, Community Planning and Development, 360.570.3798

Presenter(s):

Mark Rentfrow: Downtown Liaison, City of Olympia

Sharon Holley: Program Manager, Downtown Ambassadors, Capitol Recovery Center

Background and Analysis:

The City of Olympia in partnership with Capitol Recovery Center opened the doors of the Downtown Welcome Center in April of 2015. The Welcome Center serves as a point of contact and information for visitors to Downtown Olympia as well as for citizens in need of social and health services in the area.

Hours of Operation:

- The Downtown Welcome Center currently operates 3 days week (and is looking to add a fourth day) .
- Winter Hours 10-4 F- Sun. During the summer, hours are expanded on Friday and Saturday (10AM -5 PM)
- Additional support from Ambassadors is provided until 6 PM on Tuesday - Saturday

Welcome Center volunteer hours:

Volunteers staff the Welcome Center during all open hours of operation, usually in teams of two or three. The shifts are generally 3 hours each.

Welcome Center visitors:

From January through the end of June 2016 the Welcome center has welcomed:

- 57 international visitors (with more arriving every week!)
- 97 Out of state visitors
- 1188 local contacts

Role of partners:

The welcome Center has many great partners in the ODA, the PBIA and the Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB). Each organization promotes the benefits of the Downtown Welcome Center in the course of their daily engagements. Additional efforts are being undertaken to continue to raise awareness about the Welcome Center, its volunteer program, and the benefits it provides to the community Downtown and County Wide.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Downtown Welcome Center provides visitor information and timely updates for community events. It provides a vital point of contact for many of Thurston County's street dependent population residing in or around Downtown Olympia. The Welcome Center is also the base of operation for the Clean Team, responsible for keeping Downtown Olympia's streets and alleys free of human waste and other debris.

Financial Impact:

The Downtown Welcome Center is funded through a variety of sources including (but not limited to) The City of Olympia, The PBIA, The ODA, The VCB and Capitol Recovery Center. The annual operational cost for the Welcome Center including rent, utilities, insurance and other miscellaneous expenses is approximately \$24,000 annually.