



## Land Use & Environment Committee

### Downtown Strategy Update and Direction on Final Review Process

**Agenda Date:** 8/18/2016  
**Agenda Item Number:** 4.A  
**File Number:** 16-0912

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**Type:** report **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

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#### **Title**

Downtown Strategy Update and Direction on Final Review Process

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Move to approve the proposed steps for Planning Commission and City Council review of the Downtown Strategy (**Attachment 1**).

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to move forward with the proposed steps for Planning Commission and City Council review of the Downtown Strategy (**Attachment 1**). Request for this direction will follow a brief staff presentation on the status of the public process to form the Downtown Strategy and related code updates.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Community Planning & Development, 360.570.5847

##### **Presenter(s):**

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Community Planning & Development

##### **Background and Analysis:**

The public process to form Olympia's Downtown Strategy (DTS) is in step 4 of 5 (**Attachment 3**). Over 3,500 people have engaged in workshops and online, and City staff has met with over 30 organizational groups to discuss this community effort.

Major elements of the strategy include:

- Urban design focus with recommended updates to design guidelines, streetscape, historic preservation and view protection
- A housing strategy

- Business (retail) enhancement strategy
- Recommended tools to encourage private investment in line with community goals, including SEPA exemptions

A report of Step 3 is provided in **Attachment 4**. In summary, by the end of step 2 unique character areas to be enhanced had emerged from the iterative process of public engagement and analysis. Using these character areas as a thematic basis, the DTS team sought feedback from the public on concepts for design guidelines, historic preservation and streetscapes at an event in May and subsequently online. Pulling from this feedback and further technical analysis, the team is working to finalize these recommendations.

In April, the DTS team, along with the Economic Development Council, hosted a Business & Developers Forum. The purpose of the event was to bring local developers, realtors and business professionals together to identify issues, barriers, opportunities and solutions toward creating a climate of economic vibrancy in downtown. The team is now analyzing the ideas presented along with a variety of potential business and development tools, including SEPA exemptions previously discussed with the land use committee. A second forum will be scheduled in the fall to gain feedback on a draft business (retail) enhancement strategy.

A public workshop scheduled for September 17 will be an opportunity for the public to help shape recommendations for the housing strategy and view protection:

- In part one of the workshop, we will review and discuss a preliminary housing strategy that aims to set the stage for a vibrant urban neighborhood with housing options for a range of incomes and lifestyles;
- In part two, we'll walk through a visual analysis of key views from 10 previously selected public places and ask for feedback about priorities for public view protection.

## FINAL REVIEW

An open house to present the recommended Downtown Strategy is scheduled for October 29. This kicks off final review by the Olympia Planning Commission and City Council. **Attachment 1** is a proposed list of steps for those reviews. Staff asks the Land Use & Environment Committee for direction to move forward planning for those steps.

## CODE UPDATES

The Strategy will likely result in recommendations for a variety of code updates. **Attachment 2** lists the anticipated code updates and status.

## Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Over 3,500 people have engaged in the public process through workshops and online surveys. A summary report of Step 3 is **Attachment 4**. Other reports are available on the Downtown Strategy web page link in **Attachment 5**.

## Options:

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1. Direct staff to move forward with the proposed steps for Planning Commission and City Council review of the Downtown Strategy (**Attachment 1**).
2. Do not move forward and provide staff with alternatives to the steps proposed in **Attachment 1**

**Financial Impact:**

Included in base budget

**Attachments:**

- Proposed Final Review Steps
- Code Update Memo
- Public Participation Timeline
- Step 3 Report
- Link to Downtown Strategy web page