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City Council

Discussion of Draft Downtown Strategy and Final Review Steps

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Land Use and Environment Committee recommends the Planning Commission hold a public hearing on the draft Downtown Strategy (**attachment 1**)

City Manager Recommendation:

Review and discuss the draft Downtown Strategy. Direction for the Planning Commission's final review process will be directed to a future consent calendar.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss the Downtown Strategy. Staff's briefing will focus on proposed actions and some of the strategic thinking that influenced the timeline, and recommended guidance for the Planning Commission's review. However, any part of the Downtown Strategy may be discussed.

Staff Contact:

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Department of Community Planning & Development, (360) 570-5847

Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner

Rachel Miller, MAKERS architecture and Urban Design

Background and Analysis:

The public process to form Olympia's Downtown Strategy (DTS) is drawing to a close. After a little over a year and three Community Workshops, and ten Stakeholder Work Group meetings staff and the consultant team are ready to receive council feedback about the draft plan.

FINAL REVIEW STEPS

- City Council study session on December 6
- Final draft report will be available in mid-January

- A public open house and Planning Commission briefing on the draft report is tentatively scheduled for Jan 23, 2017
- Planning Commission will hold a public hearing (tentatively scheduled for Feb 6) and issue a recommendation to the City Council in early 2017
- The Council is expected to adopt a Downtown Strategy in early spring
- Meanwhile, action for downtown is moving forward. Several implementation items are underway or included in the preliminary 2017 operating budget (**See attached 2017 DTS Budget Summary, attachment 10**)

DIRECTION FOR PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

See **attachment 1**

STAKEHOLDER WORK GROUP & ADVISORY BOARD COMMENTS

The DTS Stakeholder Work Group (SWG) met 10 times over the year with a role to provide thoughtful insights, perspectives and ideas to staff and consultants during the public process and formation of the strategy. The group included 20 community members who brought diverse stakeholder perspectives to the table and helped engage others in the process. At their last meeting on Nov 14, the SWG composed a memo for the City Council (**see attachment 2**).

City advisory boards were also invited to provide comments, consistent with their role to “advise Council and staff on potential initiatives to include in the Strategy.” **Attachment 3** is a memo from the Arts Commission. Additional memos are expected and will either be submitted to Council at the study session, or along with the Planning Commission’s recommendation.

PROPOSED ACTIONS AND TIMELINE

Per the scope, the Downtown Strategy identifies priorities: realistic and impactful actions to move our downtown vision forward over the next six years. **Attachment 4** lists proposed actions and timeline. The recommended timeline is based upon what staff understands to be public priorities, budget realities, and strategic advantage.

Land Use action #6 (LU.6) guides the City to promote its existing incentives and other tools that encourage private investment, along with explore specific additional tools over the 6 year implementation period. **Attachment 9** is a “tool box” that provides more information about these various tools. The DTS report will also include a chart linking these tools to the goals they can best support (e.g., street and sidewalk improvements, low income housing, business development, etc.) A subsequent Land Use and Environment Committee meeting will be an opportunity to review the tools that encourage low income housing.

The priorities identified and recommended actions arose from an extensive public process. On October 29, the City hosted a public open house to showcase these priorities, and gather additional feedback from the public about which actions should be implemented within the next 2-3 years versus later in the timeline. **Attachment 5** shows the priority rankings from the two exercises offered at the event.

At the Open House, handouts that summarize the Downtown Strategy were provided for public engagement (**attachment 6.**) The full report will be complete in January.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION ON VIEWS

The planning team's scope included an analysis of views and recommendations for updating the Municipal Code. See **attachment 7** for preliminary view recommendations.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

An estimated 3,500 people have engaged in formation of the Downtown Strategy through workshops and online, and staff has met with over 30 groups to discuss this effort. Summary reports are available online at the DTS webpage (**attachment 8**)

Options:

Discuss, review, and request any additional information from staff and consultants. Discuss guidance for the Planning Commission, which staff will direct to a future consent calendar.

Financial Impact:

Included as part of the \$250,000 budget for development of a Downtown Strategy

Attachments:

- Direction for Planning Commission
- Memo from Stakeholder Work Group
- Memo from Arts Commission
- Recommended actions list
- Public priorities from open house
- DTS summary handouts
- Preliminary views recommendation
- Link to DTS webpage
- Tool Box
- 2017 Downtown Strategy Budget Summary