



Planning Commission

Public Hearing on the Downtown Strategy Draft

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Title

Public Hearing on the Downtown Strategy Draft

Recommended Action

Conduct a public hearing on the draft Downtown Strategy. Hold the written record open until March 3 at 5:00 pm.

Report

Issue:

The Commission will receive public testimony on the draft Downtown Strategy

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler
John Owen, MAKERS architecture and urban design

Background and Analysis:

The public process to form Olympia's Downtown Strategy (DTS) kicked off in November 2016 and is now in the last step, which involves a Planning Commission public hearing on the draft, the Commission's recommendation to City Council, and Council adoption.

The Downtown Strategy identifies a design framework, public priorities and realistic, impactful actions to move our Downtown vision forward over the next five years. About 3,500 people participated in this through public workshops; online surveys; business and development forums; and numerous Stakeholder Work Group, community, City Council, committee and staff technical team meetings.

The report consists of three pieces:

1. A highly graphic summary that will serve as a primary communication document
2. Seven chapters (one for each element) that describe related background, and rationale for the recommended actions

3. An appendix with various work products for reference

These documents are available online (link provided in **attachment 1**.) As of the date of this staff report, a few of the background chapters are still being formatted. As these are complete the formatted versions will replace unformatted versions on the web. Content will not be changed.

Committee & Public Comments

City advisory boards were given the option of writing a comment letter to the Commission and Council regarding DTS recommendations that pertain to their area of expertise. **Memos received are attachments 2-5.**

At their last meeting on Nov 14, the Stakeholder Work Group (SWG) composed a memo for the City Council and Planning Commission (**attachment 6**). The SWG met 10 times 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. Two members of the Planning Commission (Carole Richmond and Missy Watts) served on the SWG.

Comment cards received at the public open house held on Feb 6 are **attachment 7**.

Direction for OPC's Review

On December 6, 2016, the City Council provided the following direction to the Planning Commission (OPC) for their review of the Downtown Strategy draft:

- Hold a public hearing on the draft Downtown Strategy so that the public has an opportunity to comment on the draft report
- Summarize the public's main comments and OPC recommendation in a letter to Council. Include any memos from advisory boards.
- The letter should respond to the following questions:
 - Is the DTS consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?
 - Does any information provided cause you to differ from the staff's recommendation? How?
 - Should any new information provided be included in the report? What?

The Planning Commission is expected to deliberate on their recommendation in March. Staff will assist the Commission with preparing a document that summarizes the public's comments and with formatting the letter for Council.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

An estimated 3,500 people have engaged in formation of the Downtown Strategy through workshops and online. Summaries of what was heard at each step are available online (**attachment 1**.)

Options:

Conduct a public hearing on the draft Downtown Strategy. Hold the written record open until March 3 at 5:00 pm. (this was advertised.)

Following City Council's guidance:

1. Recommend to City Council adoption of the Downtown Strategy **as recommended by staff and consultants**
2. Recommend to City Council adoption of the Downtown Strategy **with modifications**
3. Recommend denial of the Downtown Strategy

Financial Impact:

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

Attachments:

- Link to DTS webpage
- Arts Commission Memo
- Heritage Commission (OHC) Memo
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Memo
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) Memo
- Stakeholder Work Group (SWG) Memo
- Feb 6 Comment Cards