



## Land Use & Environment Committee

### Urban Design Regulation Update

**Agenda Date:** 3/16/2017  
**Agenda Item Number:** 5.C  
**File Number:** 17-0244

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**Type:** decision **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

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#### **Title**

Urban Design Regulation Update

#### **Recommended Action**

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

Not referred to a committee.

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

Move to direct staff to proceed with the proposed timeline, technical work group and preliminary scope of work for updating Downtown design guidelines.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to proceed with the proposed timeline, technical work group and preliminary scope of work for updating Downtown design guidelines. Updating the design guidelines is a recommended action in the draft Downtown Strategy. While this action has been anticipated and appears to have public support, staff requests direction to proceed from the Committee since the Downtown Strategy has not yet been adopted by the Council.

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

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

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

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner

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

One of the first recommended actions to implement the Downtown Strategy (DTS) is an update to the Downtown design guidelines. The design guidelines will be influenced by the Comprehensive Plan and priorities identified in the Downtown Strategy (**See attachment**). The guidelines influence site design, building orientation, massing, architecture and other building details, as well as historic preservation and view protection.

The city has retained MAKERS consultants to assist in this effort. Over an eight-month period, the consultant will prepare updated guidelines with help from a technical work group (citizen volunteers) and with input from staff, public and advisory boards. Then the Planning Commission will hold a

public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding adoption.

Based on public feedback - including a recent Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) public hearing on the draft Downtown Strategy, and discussion with the Design Review Board - there appears to be public support and momentum for proceeding with a process to update the design guidelines. At OPC's hearing, some members of the public raised concerns related to the Strategy's recommendations about views which may inform the design guidelines related to view protection. Staff believes these concerns can be addressed as the draft Downtown Strategy proceeds through the final stages without the need to delay the kickoff to updating design guidelines. Whatever decisions regarding views are made in the final Downtown Strategy can be incorporated into the design guideline process at that time.

#### Proposed Timeline

The proposed timeline for the design guideline update is **attached** and includes the following steps in 2017:

- Direction from the Land Use & Environment Committee (March 16)
- Convene a technical work group
- Two public events (Open House tentatively scheduled for April 12; Fall)
- Briefings for the Design Review Board and the Heritage Commission
- Planning Commission briefings, public hearing and recommendation
- City Council adoption

#### Proposed Technical Work Group

The proposal is for the update to be guided by a technical work group. A draft charter for this group is **attached**.

#### Preliminary Scope of Work

As part of the Downtown Strategy, the City asked MAKERS to prepare an analysis of existing guidelines and preliminary recommendations for the update (**See Attachment**). The analysis concluded that while the City's current Downtown design guidelines are fairly good, some changes are recommended for consistency with the Downtown Strategy and to help improve outcomes. In summary:

- Organize Downtown guidelines into one section so that applicants can access all relevant guidelines in one place
- Make sure guidelines are focused and clear; not onerous. They should be flexible enough to allow for departures when this would result in something that better meets the intent.
- Avoid vague language. Discuss and update the existing use and definitions of "shall" and "should" to help better meet objectives
- Reinforce unique character areas. While basic standards should apply throughout Downtown, some variation should be applied.

- Craft new mixed use guidelines
- Improve historic guidelines, incorporating Secretary of the Interior standards that apply to alterations of existing historic structures
- Update requirements for nonresidential storefronts, considering essential locations where these should be required and design to promote active streetscapes
- Incorporate more Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) measures
- Consider doing away with, or simplifying, ratios as these are difficult to apply on smaller sites (as currently in Pedestrian Street Overlay)
- Update view protection guidelines and include moderate measures to protect and enhance views recommended in the Downtown Strategy.
- Various updates to address site planning and design, pedestrian access, amenities, open space, and building design
- Illustrate with photos, sketches, and diagrams, showing a variety of ways to meet the standards. Where used as good examples, make sure they are exemplary development examples consistent with the desired character for Downtown. Make sure the graphics are internally consistent.

The scope of this update does **not** include:

- Streetscape design, which will be covered in a subsequent update to the Engineering Development and Design Standards (EDDS)
- Park improvements, which are guided by a separate Parks, Arts & Recreation Plan
- Sign design, which will be included as part of the 2017 sign code update
- Changes to the review *process*, such as to the joint DRB/OHC process; however it may examine whether that is necessary and what it would take resource-wise to make a recommended change.

The Design Review Board reviewed the preliminary analysis and scope on Feb 9, 2017. See a summary of their comments in **attachment 5**. Staff will brief the Planning Commission on March 6 and the Heritage Commission on March 22.

#### Downtown Strategy Recommendation on Views

A summary of the views analysis process, and the recommendation and rationale regarding view protection, is included in the Design chapter of the Downtown Strategy draft (**pages 50-61 of the document linked in the attachment.**) The Strategy recommends moderate actions, including design guidelines, to protect and enhance three views, from:

1. West Bay Park to Mt. Rainer
2. Deschutes Parkway to Mt. Rainier

### 3. East Bay Overlook to the Capitol Dome

Public comments received during the Planning Commission's public hearing that relate to views include: the validity of surveys related to views, the scope of the defined view of Budd Inlet from the Capitol Campus Promontory; urging further analysis of views along East Bay Drive, Percival Landing and the Waterfront Route; how the Capitol Dome is defined; and building setbacks and setbacks along the water. Decisions related to some of these issues could affect decisions about view protection measures that are part of the design guideline update. As stated earlier, staff believes those issues can be worked out as the Downtown Strategy proceeds through the final stages without a need to delay the kickoff to updating the design guidelines. There seems to be public support and momentum to proceed based on the preliminary scope of work; and whatever decisions are made regarding views in the final Downtown Strategy can be incorporated into the design guideline process at that time.

#### **Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

An estimated 3,500 people engaged in formation of the Downtown Strategy through workshops and online, including input about overall urban design preferences for Downtown. The DTS summary is available online (**See Attachment**).

#### **Options:**

1. Move to direct staff to proceed with the proposed timeline, technical work group and preliminary scope of work for updating Downtown design guidelines.
2. Move to direct staff to delay starting the process to update the Downtown design guidelines, pending adoption of the Downtown Strategy.

#### **Financial Impact:**

Included as part of the \$50,000 budget for updating Downtown design guidelines

#### **Attachments:**

- 1 - Goals and priorities
- 2 - Proposed timeline
- 3 - Draft charter for technical work group
- 4 - Preliminary analysis & recommendations
- 5 - DRB notes
- 6 - Link to DTS Design chapter
- 7 - Link to DTS webpage