



City Council

Recommendation on the Downtown Strategy Draft

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Title

Recommendation on the Downtown Strategy Draft

Recommended Action

Report

Issue:

The Commission received public testimony on the draft Downtown Strategy at a hearing on February 27 and the written comment period closed March 3. The Commission deliberated on March 6, and tonight will complete deliberations along with a letter of recommendation for the City Council.

Staff Contact:

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Community Planning & Development, (360) 570-5847,
abuckler@ci.olympia.wa.us

Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler
John Owen, MAKERS architecture and urban design

Background and Analysis:

The Commission began their deliberation of the draft Downtown Strategy on March 6. Chair Mark will draft a preliminary letter of recommendation and email it to Commissioners by March 18. At this meeting, the Commission may make changes to the letter, and the aim is to adopt a recommendation letter for the City Council by the end of the night. Staff and the consultant will be available for questions.

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?

A summary of public hearing comments (including Feb 27’s oral testimony and written comments), along with some staff response, is **attachment 1**. Original written comments and detailed notes from Feb 27’s oral testimony is **attachment 2**. Advisory board memos are **attachments 3**.

At their last meeting on Nov 14, the Stakeholder Work Group (SWG) composed a memo for the City Council and Planning Commission (**attachment 4**). 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 5**.

Background

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, 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 6**.)

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 6.**)

Options:

Review and make any changes to the draft recommendation letter presented by Chair Mark. The letter should respond to the following questions posed by City Council:

- 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 Commission may:

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:

1. Public comment summary
2. Public Hearing comments
3. Advisory Board memos
4. SWG Memo
5. Feb 6 Comment Cards
6. Link to DTS webpage