



City Council

Approval of Resolution Adopting of the Downtown Strategy

Agenda Date: 4/25/2017
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number: 17-0422

Type: resolution **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

Title

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Recommended Action

Planning Commission Recommendation:

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the resolution adopting the Downtown Strategy as amended.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the resolution adopting the Downtown Strategy as amended by the Planning Commission.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a resolution adopting the final draft of the Downtown Strategy.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

John Owen, MAKERS architecture and urban design
Amy Buckler, Senior Planner

Background and Analysis:

The public process to form Olympia's Downtown Strategy (DTS) kicked off in November 2015 and is now drawing to a close. About 3,500 people participated through numerous public workshops; online surveys; business/development forums; Stakeholder Work Group and community meetings. The Strategy identifies a design framework, priorities and realistic, impactful actions to move our downtown vision forward over the next six years.

The Olympia Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommends adoption. A proposed City Council resolution to adopt the Downtown Strategy is **attached**.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The City Council provided the following direction to the Olympia 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 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 completed their deliberations on March 20, and their letter of recommendation is **attached**. The Commission recommends the City Council adopt the DTS with minor edits, most of which have already been incorporated into the DTS report. However, three of the Commission's recommendations were not incorporated, as follows:

- **General:** Regarding clear direction for budgets and work plans. Rather than create an additional heading within each chapter titled, "Capital Facilities Plan" staff has created a separate Implementation Timeline that can be used over the five year planning period to track progress, estimated costs and funding sources. An example is **attached**. The idea is that this document could be continuously revised with completed actions and upcoming steps. It could be used by the Council during budget deliberations or other key discussions.
- **Land Use:** Regarding the Seal Level Rise Response Plan. While the State Departments of Ecology and Commerce are stakeholders, for this action only the formal partners (LOTT and the Port of Olympia) are listed. Note: for all actions, the listed partners and participants should be considered preliminary; each step will be more fully developed when it comes time for implementation.
- **Homelessness:** the DTS does not recommend a separate action for the City to create a Homeless Displacement Strategy. Following the OPC recommendation, staff and Planning Commission Chair Brian Mark further reflected on the specific concerns the recommended action was intended to address. Many of these concerns relate to issues and ideas being explored by the Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability. Additional questions and concerns about the City's process for removing homeless camps from private and public property can be addressed in a briefing to the Planning Commission.

The DTS Report

A link to the Downtown Strategy is **attached**. The report has 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

The recommended timeline is based upon what staff understands to be public priorities, budget realities, and strategic advantage. As the initial years of action include planning projects, these will likely result in additional actions for the later years.

Stakeholder Work Group

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 and Planning Commission. This letter along with a list of members is **attached**.

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 included in the appendix of the DTS report, for which a link is **attached**.

Options:

1. Move to adopt by resolution the Downtown Strategy as amended by the Planning Commission
2. Do not adopt the Downtown Strategy at this time

Financial Impact:

\$250,000 cost for development of the Downtown Strategy is included as part of the adopted City budget. Additional costs for implementation actions will be identified and included in Implementation Timeline (example attached), which could be used by the Council during future budget deliberations or other key discussions.

Attachments:

Resolution
OPC Recommendation
SWG Memo
Implementation Timeline
Link to DTS