



Planning Commission
Briefing on Downtown Zoning
Recommendations

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Title

Briefing on Downtown Zoning Recommendations

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

On April 20, 2017 the Council's Land Use and Environment Committee guided staff to move forward with a public process to update Downtown zoning and development standards in accordance with the Downtown Strategy.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive the briefing. Discussion only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Briefing and discussion about recommended scope for updates to Downtown zoning and development standards.

Staff Contact:

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner, Community Planning & Development, 360.753.8314

Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler, Senior Planner
Leonard Bauer, Assistant Director, CP&D

Background and Analysis:

One of the first actions recommended in the Downtown Strategy (DTS) is to update Downtown zoning and development standards. This effort is anticipated to occur in 2017-2018. Staff will review the scope of work - a summary is **attached**.

As part of the process to form the DTS, the planning team compared current zoning and development standards with Downtown goals and character area concepts, and found these to be generally consistent. Most of Downtown is zoned as Downtown Business (DB) or Urban Waterfront (UW), both of which provide flexibility for a variety of land uses. **See attached zoning map.** In addition to recommending some minor updates and general housekeeping, the scope includes three

main areas where changes could be made to be more consistent with the Downtown Strategy:

Consider an Art/Tech Overlay

The overlay would allow for uses desired in the Art/Tech area that are not desired in other parts of Downtown. This area encourages light industrial uses, such as artisan manufacturing/studios and microbreweries, distilleries and wineries. While these uses might fit throughout Downtown, the City may also want to consider limiting these or subsets of these uses to the Art/Tech area only, primarily to contain potential impacts, such as smell, noise or vibration. In addition, or perhaps as an alternative measure, the City may want to focus adaptive reuse incentives to encourage these types of uses within this area. The underlying zoning of DB and UW could provide a baseline of allowed uses and incentives also available in other areas, while the addition of a special overlay district could provide for unique opportunities and character development.

Consider Zoning in Southeast Neighborhood Area

Much of the Southeast Neighborhood Character Area is zoned Urban Residential (UR), which is intended to accommodate multifamily housing in an urban neighborhood close to activity, jobs and transit. While the zoning and the character area vision are generally aligned, the City should consider expanding the boundary of the UR zone to more fully encompass the SE neighborhood, along with changes to allow for more neighborhood serving commercial uses.

This area is also adjacent to the Capitol Campus and several parcels are owned by the State or are already occupied by commercial uses. Thus, it will be important to retain as much land as possible in residential use to maintain a critical mass of residences. At the same time, residents in the Southeast need better access to local commercial services.

Expanding the UR zone boundaries (avoiding land owned by the State) and allowing more small neighborhood-serving businesses on the ground floor of mixed use buildings would strengthen the urban residential nature of this area. Additionally, expanding home based business options might make live-work units more attractive. The City should also consider prohibiting new office uses here to prevent additional loss of residential properties.

Further consideration of recommended view protection

The Downtown Strategy recommends the City take moderate actions, including design guidelines and removing height bonuses where applicable, to protect/enhance three views:

- West Bay Park to Mt. Rainier
- East Bay Overlook to Capitol Dome
- Deschutes Parkway to Mt. Rainier

Upon adoption of the DTS, the City Council had some concerns about the view protection recommendations and guided that the zoning update process should result in and provide for consideration of a range of options, including removing height bonuses, other possible methods to protect the views, and no action.

Public Process

The first step is for staff to meet with affected parties (i.e., property owners, artists, neighborhood associations, etc.) over the next few months. This will be followed by a public meeting to inform and

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gather input, a SEPA comment period, briefing to the Planning Commission about a draft ordinance with options and implications, and a Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the City Council.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The recommended scope for zoning and development standard updates was developed as part of the extensive public process to form a Downtown Strategy.

Options:

Discussion only. No action requested.

Financial Impact:

Included in base budget.

Attachments:

Proposed Updates
Zoning map
Zoning map w/ character areas
DTS Overview