



Land Use & Environment Committee

Downtown Design Guidelines Update Briefing

Agenda Date: 4/25/2019
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Title

Downtown Design Guidelines Update Briefing

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive a briefing on the Downtown design guidelines update. Briefing only; No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive a briefing on the Downtown design guidelines Update.

Staff Contact:

Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development, 360.570.3722

Presenter(s):

Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

One of the first recommended actions to implement the Downtown Strategy (DTS) is an update to the Downtown design guidelines. These are regulations that help ensure new development and significant redevelopment projects achieve a level of design quality that is consistent with our vision as expressed in our Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Strategy.

Design guidelines address functional as well as aesthetic issues. They influence site design, building orientation, massing, architecture and other building details, as well as historic preservation. They intend for development to be compatible with neighbors; promote safety, security and livability; be environmentally responsible; promote health and pedestrian activity; and upgrade the physical attractiveness of a development.

The City retained MAKERS consultants to assist with updating Downtown design guidelines. The consultant has reviewed all comments received on the working draft of the update and a final draft has been prepared for a final round of internal review by the current planning staff.

Along with the proposed downtown design guideline update, staff will propose view protection measures guided by the Downtown Strategy, which will include amendments to Title 18, Unified Development Code, of the Olympia Municipal Code.

PROCESS SO FAR

- The following steps have been completed:
- City hosted a public workshop on design preferences (4/17/17)
- A design technical work group (TWG) met seven times to analyze potential updates
- Planning staff analyzed draft proposals
- The consultant and staff met with:
 - The Design Review Board (2/9/17; 3/22/18)
 - Olympia Heritage Commission (3/22/17; 3/28/18)
 - Eastside Neighborhood Association (3/21/18)
 - Olympia Avenue Historic Neighborhood (4/11/18)
 - Port of Olympia staff (4/13/18)
 - Downtown Neighborhood Association (5/10/18)
 - Olympia Downtown Alliance Design Committee (4/11/18; 5/9/18)
 - Some local developers and architects (various)
 - Property owners affected by proposed view protection measures (various)
- The City hosted a public open house to present the working draft (4/18/18)
- Public comment period on working draft (open through 3/28/18-4/30/18)

Related work included amending the Comprehensive Plan to memorialize the landmark views identified as being important in the adopted Downtown Strategy. Additionally, City staff has sent the draft amendments to the Washington State Department of Commerce with a 'Notice of Intent to Adopt' amendments to the city's development regulations.

NEXT STEPS

1. Issue Public Hearing Draft
2. Legal review
3. SEPA Determination
4. Planning Commission briefing and Public Hearing
5. Forward ordinance and OPC recommendation to City Council

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. A link to the summary of public input from the April 17, 2017, workshop is at the attached website.

Options:

Discussion only.

Financial Impact:

Included as part of the \$50,000 budget for updating Downtown design guidelines. An additional contract for up to \$8,000 allows for additional public outreach and meetings. This contract is set to

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expire in June of 2019. Depending on staff availability, it is possible that an extension may be needed to keep the consultants onboard through the public hearing process.

Attachments:

[Link to Downtown Design Guidelines Web Page](#)