



Planning Commission

Downtown Design Guidelines

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Title

Downtown Design Guidelines

Recommended Action

Information only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Discussion on the Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Zoning Code Amendments.

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)
- Revisions based on public comments, other city staff (on-going)
- Planning Commission Briefing - Status Update (6/17/19)

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 Review Draft with 30 day comment period
2. Public Outreach (including Olympia Downtown Alliance, Chamber of Commerce, Technical Work Group members, property owners, businesses, stakeholders)
3. SEPA Determination
4. Open House or other public meeting
5. Heritage Commission and Design Review Board Briefings
6. State Agency review of related amendments
7. Planning Commission briefing and Public Hearing
8. Legal Review
9. 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:

None. Information only.

Financial Impact:

The City had a \$50,000 contract with MAKERS Consultants to help develop the draft Design

Guidelines, with an additional \$8,000 that was used to have the consultants participate in public outreach and public meetings throughout the process. The contract expired in June of 2019. The remainder of the work is anticipated to be completed by city staff, including additional public meetings, public outreach, and refinement of the draft guidelines before issuing the public hearing draft.

Attachments:

Project Webpage
Design Guidelines Basics
Major Changes Summary
Historic Properties
View Protection Measures
Residential Open Space
Other Development Codes
How Topics are Addressed