



## Heritage Commission

### Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Zoning Code Amendments - Briefing

**Agenda Date:** 11/20/2019  
**Agenda Item Number:** 6.A  
**File Number:** 19-1060

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**Type:** information   **Version:** 1   **Status:** Filed

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#### **Title**

Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Zoning Code Amendments - Briefing

#### **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 the Downtown design guidelines. The consultant reviewed all comments received on the working draft of the update and prepared a second draft for a final round of internal review by 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 (4/2019)
- Issue second public draft (7/2019)
- Olympia Avenue Historic District (9/17/19)
- Planning Commission Briefings - Status Update (6/17/19); Overview (8/19/2019); 18.120.100s (10/17/19); 18.120.200s (11/4/19). Additional briefings scheduled for November 18 and December 2.
- Initiate environmental review (9/25/19)
- State Agency Review (9/25/19)

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

- Continued Public Outreach
- Heritage Commission Briefing (Nov 20, 2019)
- Design Review Board Briefings (Dec 12, 2019 and Jan 9, 2020)
- Open House or other public meeting
- Planning Commission final briefing and Public Hearing
- Legal Review
- Forward ordinance and OPC recommendation to City Council

### **Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

There was a lot of outreach conducted in order to develop the first public draft and in response to it. Because of staff changes and a delay in the project, there has been a significant amount of time between issuance of the two public drafts. For that reason, there will be at least a 30-day comment period on the

second draft. Staff anticipates a third public draft, more public outreach, an open house, and more briefings to the Planning Commission.

While staff does anticipate a fair amount of community interest, it is unknown at this point how significant the comments will be on the second draft or what, if any, new issues will be raised. To date most of the comments received have been around historic preservation issues, view protection measures, and the need to allow new development while maintaining the integrity of the downtown. People have asked about how some of the newer buildings in the downtown relate to the proposed guidelines, how parks and recreation needs will be met, and how to balance design requirements with the desire to keep housing units affordable.

**Options:**

None. Information only.

**Financial Impact:**

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

Draft Downtown Design Guidelines