



## Planning Commission

### Briefing on Other Code Amendments Related to Proposed Amendment of the Downtown Design Guidelines

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#### **Title**

Briefing on Other Code Amendments Related to Proposed Amendment of the Downtown Design Guidelines

#### **Recommended Action**

Information only. No action requested.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Discussion on the proposed code amendments to various chapters in Title 18, Unified Development Code, to support amendments of the Downtown Design Guidelines.

##### **Staff Contact:**

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##### **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.

#### Background

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 reviewed all comments received on the working draft of the update and a final draft was prepared for a final round of internal review by the current planning staff. Based on staff comments, and to address public comments that had been received on the first public draft, revisions have been made and a second public draft is now available.

Along with the proposed downtown design guideline update, staff proposes view protection measures guided by the Downtown Strategy, which will include amendments to Title 18, Unified Development Code, of the Olympia Municipal Code. Other chapters in Title 18 will require revisions to ensure consistency with the new design guidelines for downtown.

Other chapters in Title 18, Unified Development Code, relate or refer to the Downtown Design Guidelines. In some cases these sections should be amended to ensure consistency with the proposed Downtown Design Guidelines. These chapters include:

- 18.04 - Residential Districts
- 18.06 - Commercial Districts
- 18.16 - Pedestrian Streets Overlay
- 18.38 - Parking
- 18.76 - Design Review Board
- 18.100 - Design Review

In addition, strikeout versions of existing chapters 18.120 (the existing Downtown Design Guidelines) and 18.150 (the existing Port Peninsula Design Guidelines) are proposed, as the draft Downtown Design Guidelines are designed to replace both of those chapters.

The briefing on these related code amendments is intended to cover the content of changes proposed and how it relates to the draft guidelines. For example, proposed amendments address measures to protect landmark views from public observation points (as determined in the Downtown Strategy) and to better integrate Historic Preservation into project review throughout the Downtown.

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

There has been a lot of outreach to date, 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 - Discussion only, no action required.

**Financial Impact:**

Funding for the consulting firm, MAKERS, to complete the preliminary draft was awarded earlier in the process. The work and that contract have been completed. The remaining work to complete the guidelines and related code amendments is part of the Community Planning and Development Department's base budget.

**Attachments:**

Project webpage

18.04 - Residential Districts

18.06 - Commercial Districts

18.16 - Pedestrian Streets Overlay

18.38 - Parking

18.76 - Design Review Board

18.100 - Design Review