



PBIA Advisory Board

Recommendation on the Downtown Improvement District (DID)

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Title

Recommendation on the Downtown Improvement District (DID)

Report

Issue:

Whether to provide a recommendation of support for the DID proposal following a briefing from the Downtown Olympia Alliance

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Todd Cutts, Executive Director, Olympia Downtown Alliance
Amy Buckler

Background and Analysis:

Downtown property owners are exploring the notion of a Downtown Improvement District (DID), which would be a property-owner based assessment in downtown Olympia. The Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA) is helping to facilitate this process. A petition drive and City Council decision on whether to adopt the DID are anticipated in 2020.

The City Council would like the PBIA to provide a letter of recommendation about whether the City should pursue adopting the DID. The ODA has asked the PBIA to provide a letter of support.

ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Mr. Cutts will provide an overview of the DID proposal, including some elements which have changed since the PBIA's last briefing.

A draft operational plan and FAQ's are **attached**.

PROCESS/TIMELINE

The DID was initially proposed in 2019. The ODA has been conducting outreach for many months,

and met with the PBIA Board to discuss an initial proposal on May 7 and June 26. The Olympia City Council held a study session on Aug 13. And the ODA and City held a joint public information meeting on Sept 16. Since then, a small work group with two City Councilmembers, City Staff and DID steering committee members met to gain clarity on the proposal and lay out a process for bringing it forward to the City.

Under State law, establishing a DID requires a petition process, with support required from property owners representing more than 60 percent of the total assessments to be paid in the district. The petition drive is anticipated to start in February. Once petitions are verified, the Olympia City Council would hold a public hearing to consider adopting the DID by ordinance. **See attached timeline.**

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO PBIA?

DID's are authorized under Washington State law by RCW 35.87A. The City's current business-based improvement district, the Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA), is authorized under the same law. It is legal to have both a property-owner based assessment (DID) and a business-based assessment (PBIA) in the same area; however, it is understood that the downtown community would be unlikely to welcome two assessments.

The intent is, if the City ultimately adopts an ordinance establishing the DID, then the City would follow up that action with an ordinance dis-establishing the PBIA.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

The PBIA has been asked to provide a letter of recommendation to the City Council. This would be provided at a Council meeting (tbd) prior to the start of the ODA petition drive.

Following tonight's briefing and discussion, the PBIA should vote on whether to provide a recommendation in support or opposition to the DID. Both the majority and minority opinions may be captured in the letter of recommendation. Staff will help capture the opinions expressed in order to draft a letter for Council which can then be reviewed by the Board at their regular meeting in February. Once the final recommendation letter is approved by the Board it will be signed by the Chair and provided to the City Council.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The PBIA released a survey about the DID to ratepayers in July; results are attached. Also attached are notes from a PBIA Board roundtable discussion.

Options:

1. Move to provide a recommendation in support of the DID
2. Move to provide recommendation in opposition to the DID

Financial Impact:

The DID is anticipated to have an initial budget of \$560,000, compared to the PBIA annual budget of \$100,000.

Attachments:

Draft Operational Plan

FAQ's
Process Timeline
PBIA Roundtable Notes
PBIA Survey Results