



Planning Commission

Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Code Amendments - Public Hearing

Agenda Date: 2/10/2020
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Title

Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Code Amendments - Public Hearing

Recommended Action

Move to approve the Draft Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Code Amendments.

Report

Issue:

Public Hearing on the Draft Downtown Design Guidelines and Related Code Amendments.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development
John Owen, MAKERS Consulting

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 the City's vision as expressed in the 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 Current Planning staff. Based on staff comments, and

to address public comments that had been received on the first public draft, revisions were made and a second public draft was issued. City staff reviewed the second draft with the Planning Commission, Heritage Commission, Design Review Board, and held an Open House to solicit comments. A final round of revisions were made to address the comments received and the public hearing draft was issued (Attachment 2).

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. These related amendments are attached (Attachment 3).

The draft guidelines are divided into four distinct sections, as follows:

- 18.120.100s - Introduction
- 18.120.200s - Site Planning
- 18.120.300s - Site Elements and Design
- 18.120.400s - Building Design

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Community participation has been a large part of the development of the draft guidelines. Staff from the City and MAKERS worked with a Technical Work Group and held public meetings to gather input and prepare the draft guidelines. Additional outreach was completed to ensure revisions to earlier drafts met the expectations and needs of those who provided comments.

An Open House public meeting was held on January 23, 2020. Ten people attended the meeting. Written comments received since the issuance of the second draft have been attached to the staff report (Attachment 4).

Options:

After conducting the Public Hearing and deliberating on the draft amendments the Commission may:

1. Recommend approval of the Downtown Design Guidelines and related code amendments, as written.
2. Recommend approval of the Downtown Design Guidelines and related code amendments, with modifications.
3. Recommend denial of the Downtown Design Guidelines and related code amendments.

Financial Impact:

Funding for the consulting firm, MAKERS, to complete the preliminary drafts 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
Draft Downtown Design Guidelines
Draft Related Code Amendments

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Public Comments