



City Council

Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Update

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Title

Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

None.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive a briefing on the Preliminary Draft Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive a briefing on the Preliminary Draft Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

David Ginther, Senior Planner

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Background and Analysis:

In 2014, the Olympia Comprehensive Plan was updated following significant public outreach and multiple public participation opportunities. The adopted plan contains a vision for the Capital Mall area to:

1. Eventually transition to a high-density mixed-use neighborhood where people can walk, bike, or take the bus to obtain goods, services, and entertainment.
2. Keep the subarea a regional draw for the retailers and other businesses.

The main purpose of the Capital Mall Triangle planning project is to determine how to facilitate the development envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

The planning project has two major components: a Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a subarea plan. Both the Draft EIS and the preliminary draft subarea plan have been written based on community input collected over the past year and are now out for public review. In addition to general comments on both documents, the public is being asked to help select the preferred alternative for the EIS.

Alternatives are future development scenarios which the EIS evaluates for potential significant adverse environmental impacts. The first alternative is a “no action” alternative. This alternative assumes development would continue under current regulations and programs. A second alternative includes a range of moderate actions the city can take to help facilitate the envisioned development within the triangle. The third alternative is a bold approach that includes a more extensive set of actions, partnerships, and investments for the city to undertake to spur a significant amount of the envisioned development within the triangle. The alternatives are described in detail in the Draft EIS. Based on all comments received, a preferred alternative will be selected (which could be a ‘hybrid’ of the three alternatives in the DEIS). The Final EIS will include the preferred alternative.

The preliminary draft subarea plan is also out for community review. The final draft subarea plan will be released after the preferred alternative has been selected. A preliminary draft is being released now to provide the community with as much additional time as possible to review and provide input and guidance for the final version.

Implementation actions will occur after the final subarea plan is adopted. This includes a planned action ordinance, which will incorporate the mitigation identified in the Final EIS and allow proposed development consistent with the subarea plan to move forward without an additional project-level environmental review process.

Climate Analysis:

The planning project will result in long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It will facilitate development of high-density residential housing in a core urban area that is designated in the City’s comprehensive plan for high-density housing mixed with commercial and other services. Development of this style of housing in this location will result in a number of benefits in regards to climate impacts including the following: reducing sprawl; providing needed housing in close proximity to goods, services, and jobs; providing more efficient housing that consumes less energy, less drinking water, and produces less wastewater; construction of a more efficient transportation network with more connections and more opportunities for active forms of travel; and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled.

Equity Analysis:

The community will benefit from additional housing being developed. There is significant nationwide data which shows that increasing the housing supply has a positive impact on the cost of renting or buying housing. The additional inventory of housing will help to address the high demand and provide much needed housing for the additional residents expected in the next 20 years. Both those seeking low-income housing as well as market rate housing will benefit from additional housing options.

Businesses in general will benefit from additional residents (potential customers) located in close proximity to their establishments. Smaller businesses could be impacted by rising property values and higher commercial rents within the subarea. This could occur as the area develops and becomes

a more desirable location in which to live and conduct business. Project staff are coordinating with the business community to determine how best to meet their needs and address their concerns. The project will also be conducting a business displacement analysis and provide recommendations on methods to mitigate potential impacts.

Residents of adjacent neighborhoods, future residents of the subarea, employees, and customers will benefit from new transportation connections into and through the subarea. These multi-modal connections will be constructed and funded as new development occurs within the subarea. Along with associated safety improvements, these connections will provide easier and safer access into and through the subarea for all modes of travel, including active forms of travel such as walking, rolling, and biking. Community members without vehicles will benefit from improved transit efficiency and service. Project staff are coordinating with Intercity Transit in regard to planning for a more appropriate location for the main transit stop within the subarea. This would potentially reduce route times and help to improve the efficiency of routes and schedules.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The project has received approximately 300 written comments from the community focused mainly on:

1. transportation connections and safety;
2. housing, development, and community amenities; and
3. environmental issues.

The majority comments on the alternatives preferred Alternative 3, but with several changes. These include not increasing building heights, providing affordable housing mixed in with market rate, and having smaller dispersed public areas (e.g., parks or plazas) instead of a larger central one.

Extensive outreach has been conducted for the project using multiple methods and a variety of participation opportunities have been offered. See the “Public Outreach ” document for additional details.

Financial Impact:

The project is funded by a \$250,000 Transit Oriented Development and Implementation grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce. The City of Olympia has supplemented the project with an additional \$83,529.

Options:

1. Receive the briefing.
2. Do not receive the briefing.
3. Receive the briefing at another time.

Attachments:

Public Outreach Summary
Project Webpage