

**DOWNTOWN PLANNING**  
**Council Response to Questions**  
*(with additional input from Storefront Studio Kickoff Meeting)*

Questions for Council Consideration	Council Comments
<p>1. What does the Council see as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the viability of Downtown Des Moines?</p> <p><i>** Additional entries from Storefront Studio Kickoff Meeting on 4/2/08</i></p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b>  Des Moines (DM) Theater as possible centerpiece (also opportunity)  Historic Beach Park and Marina  Walkable Downtown (DT) (but no place to walk – weakness)  Human scale  Natural attributes and more than 5000 hotel rooms in SeaTac, HCC, Central WA Univ.  Property owners now consolidating parcels  Successful developments ( Dr. Andrews &amp; others)  Not yet overdeveloped – Gig Harbor good example  Location, location, location  <i>** Farmers market</i></p> <p><b>Weaknesses (Constraints):</b>  Buildings fronting on sidewalks  DM not taking advantage of location – natural attributes and lots of hotel rooms, HCC, Central WA Univ,  Downtown water system infrastructure  Need additional street (i.e., curb, gutters, sidewalks) and parking infrastructure  6<sup>th</sup> Avenue needs to be included in DT planning  Differing views both within the community and among Council on what downtown should be and for whom  Small lots and alleys – lots 60’ wide x 100’ deep separated by small alleys  Wall of condos along Marina/<i>**Public views “privatized”</i>  Too long, too much area, need to make area more square  No public/municipal facilities in DT  Parking  Buildings need extra foot of height/floor to meet 9 ft ceiling heights of contemporary requirements  <i>** Lack of signs directing traffic to 7<sup>th</sup></i>  <i>**Pedestrian connections to Marina moorage and for seniors living along 6<sup>th</sup></i>  <i>**Hard to find places to spend money in Downtown</i>  <i>**“Tired” north end and middle of Marine View Drive corridor</i>  <i>**Historic platting and zoning mistakes</i>  <i>**Inadequate DT bus services and bus infrastructure (i.e., bus shelters and benches)</i>  <i>**High volume, fast north/south commuter traffic</i>  <i>**No DT entry signs at Kent-Des Moines/MVD and 216<sup>th</sup>/MVD</i></p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b>  Attract more restaurants and shopping  Redevelopment of AAA Liquidating into a restaurant (doing nothing is a threat)  Retail – promote on both sides of Marine View Drive (MVD) <u>and</u> 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue S  DM Elementary – preserve historic aspect; communicate more clearly to HSD on City’s vision for school  Connections to Marina and Beach Park (Storefront Studio)  Height analysis to better understand opportunities (e.g., QFC an opportunity area)  Provide financial incentives for large projects with excess parking (e.g., shared parking)  Establish core area for priority – more dense development that transitions out to lower density  Facilitate major anchor projects (e.g., work City did for Waterview Crossing (formerly SSI Pacific Place)  Start with clean canvas (as did with Pacific Ridge)</p>

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	<p>Software-assisted view analysis to inform decision  DT can be attractive  Parking – okay for City to become involved  Reconsider making MVD and 7<sup>th</sup> one way streets in opposite directions  ** <i>Beach Park redevelopment</i>  ** <i>Interpretative displays along new Marina walkway</i>  ** <i>Passenger ferries</i>  ** <i>Possibility of new National Park Service Maritime Park Overlay on Puget Sound</i>  ** <i>Des Moines Memorial Drive Corridor and its terminus at 227/Marina and its redevelopment as a living memorial to WWI vets</i>  ** <i>Accessibility to 3 large retirement centers</i>  ** <i>Create east/west depth and orientation, not just north/south</i>  ** <i>Des Moines Creek Trail connections to other KC trail systems</i>  ** <i>Create more gathering places</i></p> <p><b>Threats:</b>  No action  That Council will make “popular” but not “right” decisions  Water system/district  Dom building a mistake if we want small DT feel</p> <p><b>Other Issues to Consider:</b>  <u>Vision</u>  Reconcile visitor-oriented vs. resident-oriented retail  DM as a tourist spot or developed for DM residents?  Destination vs. residential focus  Start with a clean canvas  Consider condemnation  Cannon Beach, OR good example  Gig Harbor, WA good example</p> <p><u>Transportation/Parking</u>  Public and private parking (redevelopment) – requirement vs. capacity and availability  7<sup>th</sup> Avenue – not residential as suggested by Ravenhurst report  One-way couplet – MVD and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue S or maintain 2-way traffic on each street  Consider vacating alleys  Reconcile pedestrian oriented vs. pedestrian friendly vs. accommodate pedestrians  Municipal parking facility or no municipal parking facility  Need plan for 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue S  Provide decent parking  Vacate alleys or not  Develop new mid-block pedestrian “streets” and/or close street for pedestrians</p> <p><u>Height/Bulk/Scale</u>  Density – needs further thought; Council needs to be clear about what it wants  Not in support of multi-story building at QFC – scale not appropriate for DT or encourage such development  Need agreement on how much bulk to allow – Floor Area Ratio, Parking, Setbacks  Clarify “Building heights” vs. “height of buildings” – maximum height and how height affects views  Downzoning should be considered</p>

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	<u>Other</u> Need inventory of developable property Invite Dr. Andrews and other property owners and DT developers to talk to Council
2. How does Council want to approach the Downtown planning work? a. A visioning process to inform the update of the Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan and development of design guidelines? b. A visioning process followed by a comprehensive analysis of the Downtown neighborhood and development of a strategic plan?	2.b. seems to be Council's preference.
3. Does Council envision the process to be solely Council-driven or to include input from the Planning Agency, stakeholders and community at large?	Consensus --Need community input with Council leadership and ownership (make "right" not just "popular" decisions)
4. What level of staff input does Council anticipate?	Want staff input.
5. Is Council interested in using new technologies for both planning and community outreach activities associated with the Downtown planning work?	Yes. Height analysis to better understand opportunities (e.g., QFC as an opportunity area); Software-assisted view analysis to inform decision
6. Would Council consider use of a facilitator at strategic planning or working sessions such as project visioning and planning/design charrettes?	Yes.
7. What are the Council's expectations with respect to the University of Washington Storefront Studio wayfinding project and how the project will be integrated with or complement the downtown planning work?	Council needs to provide vision; Some not interested in wayfinding – add amenities Look forward to Storefront Studio
8. Is Council interested in establishing design guidelines for the Downtown Neighborhood?	Consensus – Willing to consider design guidelines