

Property Owner FAQ

DOWNTOWN OLYMPIA
DID

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

What is a DID?

A Downtown Improvement District (DID) is a private sector funding mechanism designed to improve the environment of a designated area with new services financed by a self-imposed and self-governed assessment. These services (such as enhanced safety and maintenance) are provided exclusively within the district, and are an enhancement to – rather than a replacement of – those already provided by the City.

Are there DIDs elsewhere?

Yes, DIDs are a common tool. There are over 1,000 DIDs across North America, many concentrated in downtown areas. Virtually every other urban area in the West is served by a DID charged with managing and marketing downtown. In Washington there are DIDs in Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Yakima, and Spokane. They are also common in state capitals such as Sacramento, Boise, and Madison.

Who will manage the DID?

The DID will be governed by a DID Board made up of property and business owners, representing a wide variety of geographic sub-districts and use-types within downtown. For day to day management, the DID will contract with a DID Manager, likely Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA), to provide administrative support to ensure that DID initiatives are managed effectively.

Will the City reduce its existing services downtown?

No. The City of Olympia will establish a documented base level of pre-DID services. The DID will not replace any pre-existing general City services, but will provide enhanced services to better meet current demands and expectations for downtown Olympia.

What services will the DID provide?

The DID would provide services as determined by its board of directors (made up of property owners and business operators with the DID). The board could adjust services on an annual basis as needs and priorities change. Initial services would fall within the following two main categories:

- **Beautification & Hospitality Services**

- Concentrating on downtown's streetscape, the DID would complement existing City maintenance efforts, providing services that may include: comprehensive sidewalk sweeping, scrubbing, and power washing; litter and graffiti removal; and landscaping.

- Focusing on the downtown experience, an ambassador-style program would have the ability to offer visitor's information and insights, while also providing street dependent individuals outreach and connection to local service providers.

- **Assisting Small Business**

- The DID would provide resources to assist in the success of small businesses downtown. Programming could include enhanced marketing efforts, new and expanded special events, small business training, and other targeted special projects.

Additional Questions?

Contact Todd Cutts, Executive Director, Olympia Downtown Alliance
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Who decides if we need a DID?

Property Owners. The DID is self-imposed by property owners who are in the designated area. This is not a general assessment on taxpayers. Formation of a DID requires a petition process. In order to form the DID, petition support is required from more than 60% of the total assessments to be paid in the district. Therefore, if you will be paying more into the DID, your "vote" will have more weight in the petition process. If there is sufficient support through the petition process, a public hearing will be held by City Council to establish the DID through ordinance.

Will the DID last forever?

The DID will have an initial term of 10 years. At the halfway point in year 5, a formal evaluation will be conducted to determine that the services and assessment methods are consistent with the needs of the district. To extend the DID beyond the initial 10-year term, a new petition process will need to be undertaken to affirm support for the district. Once in place, DIDs tend to have strong support from downtown property owners – the DID renewal rate nationally is 99%.

What will it cost me?

It depends on property type and location. The chart below shows rates for different types of properties. Different rates are proposed to acknowledge that the level of benefit varies by property type – i.e., non-profit and residential properties don't benefit from DID services in the same way that commercial properties do. Properties will be assessed under a formula which considers both street frontage and assessed value. Residential properties are charged at 75% of full assessment rates, while non-profits (including properties with subsidized affordable housing) are charged at 50% of full assessment rates.

Additionally, properties in the Core (as shown on the map) will pay twice the rate as the periphery of downtown due to a higher frequency of services and benefits expected in the Core.

PROPOSED BUDGET	
Clean & Safe	\$425,000
Assisting Small Businesses	\$45,000
Management	\$90,000
TOTAL	\$560,000

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT RATES	
CORE	
Commercial	\$7.60 per foot of frontage + .00104 per \$1 of value
Residential	\$5.70 per foot of frontage + .00078 per \$1 of value
Non-Profit	\$3.80 per foot of frontage + .00052 per \$1 of value
NON-CORE	
Commercial	\$3.80 per foot of frontage + .00052 per \$1 of value
Residential	\$2.85 per foot of frontage + .00039 per \$1 of value
Non-Profit	\$1.90 per foot of frontage + .00026 per \$1 of value

DID Boundaries

Properties in the core (purple) have different assessment rates than those in the rest of the district (green).

See assessment rates (above) for what the DID will cost you.

