

# DOZA Citywide Design Policy

## ADVOCACY GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY

MEMBERS, BUSINESS DISTRICTS & NEIGHBORHOODS

Learn More: [www.pdxmainstreets.org/DOZA](http://www.pdxmainstreets.org/DOZA)



The Portland Main Streets Design Initiative supports communities with tools, education, and policy advocacy to advance design literacy and innovation.

DOZA stands for the Design Overlay Zoning Amendments (DOZA). This policy is very important, as it will guide all new design and development of buildings thru new standards, guidelines and "Design Overlays".

Why it Matters: This is the first major update in nearly 30 years. It's a needed project and staff has done good work but there are significant community concerns that need to be addressed as we shape policy that will guide the future of our entire city. It will also impact many of our "at risk" Main Streets. Weigh in NOW.

### KEY CONCERNS (More Advocacy Talking Points + Detail Below)

- Lack of Public Engagement - Very little outreach done by City on a major citywide design policy, particularly for the East Side. The project claims to be "Designing a City for People" yet those most affected have not been engaged.
- 65 Foot Tall Trigger for Design Commission Review (6-stories) is too high given big impacts on narrow older vulnerable main streets! This creates contrast over compatibility, narrow lots are a poor fit so lead to demolition, and lack of main street design standards lead to creating bad context, big impacts and loss of neighborhood identity.
- What context should we be relating to? Context is raised as a guiding issue but there are no pictures of our long-standing building context only recent construction in the DOZA documents. Should we be relating to the last 5-10 years or the 100+ harmonious design of our city that follows a common pattern which helps new buildings fit even when taller or of a different character?
- What we are building is un-affordable due to poor design practices and frequently novelty for novelty sake adding further cost and little quality. Good time-tested design that you see on many older main streets is generally a more affordable design pattern we can use for new buildings that can be denser, with higher quality and more affordability. (Walsh Construction has good design guidance for this).
- We are gentrifying, demolishing and displacing communities. We have a terrible history of this, yet the City does not recognize how unguided growth, narrow siloed policy, and crisis-based thinking is unintentionally perpetuating this right NOW. It's not sustainable, equitable nor affordable.
- 13 undesignated historic districts are at risk (Hawthorne, Alberta, Belmont, Sellwood, Freemont, Montavilla, etc) Despite identifying these vulnerable areas as important in the DOZA staff report (p. 52-53 Low Rise Commercial "Vintage Areas"), it is not deemed a priority for staff or Planning Commission. These areas were identified in the incomplete "[Low Rise Commercial Storefront Analysis](#)" in 2016. PDX Main Streets has done much of the work identified but the city will not recognize and value community-based planning, only top-down approaches. Advocate for vulnerable Main Streets as a priority for decision-makers/Mayor NOW.

### BEST WAYS TO GIVE INPUT - Comments Due November 15, 2019

1) **Via the Map App** – quick and easy [www.portlandmaps.com/bps/mapapp](http://www.portlandmaps.com/bps/mapapp)

2) **Write a Letter:** Must include your name and address. Send to: Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission/Design Overlay Zone Amendments | 1900 SW 4th, Suite 7100 | Portland, Oregon 97201

3) **Call the Mayor** (503)-823-4120 - Its's fast and easy and where the decision power is. Ask for the Mayor's staff person who is assigned to planning policy. This is not a technical issue - it is political. A quick phone call may make all the difference in establishing overwhelming public interest in better design of our City. Ultimately, the mayor sets the Planning Commission and Planning Department budgets and staff priorities. Tell the City to:

1. **Prioritize vulnerable Main Street business districts in budget and staff priorities** ("Future Work for Low Rise Commercial Storefront Areas" in the Staff Report) – direct the Planning Commission to do same.
2. **Practice Equity & Inclusion in Policymaking** - Conduct a "Visual Preference Survey" to lower barriers to participation in complex policy so ALL can be involved in these critical design decisions that are reshaping our City. Support community-based planning like PDX Main Streets Design Guidelines grassroots work.
3. **Extend the deadline for comments on DOZA** and host more Planning Commission public hearings.

## **DOZA PROJECT OVERVIEW + TERMS**

**Design Overlay:** There are new and updated Design Overlays ("D-Overlays") that will have new guiding policy. You can view these mapped overlays on the Map App and give testimony there as well.

**Design Standards (Volume 2):** Clear and objective "standards" that will govern design of most new developments - no design review is required. There are mandatory points and optional additional points - this is something to weigh in on. You can find these on page 34 in Volume 2. This document is long, dry reading and confusing, and there is a context-sensitive section which needs work. We suggest reading SMILE's letter to help understand the framework with excellent recommendations for Main Street specific standards. For the mandatory and optional standards with associated required point values, this is where SMILE's recs are useful and we are suggesting support for these to the PSC.

**Design Guidelines (Volume 3):** 10 Overarching Guidelines. These are more flexible, however more open to interpretation. If a project cannot meet the Standards, then the new "Design Guidelines" will be used. Design review by staff is given if in the Design Overlay. Design Review is given by the Design Commission if in Central City, Gateway or for buildings above 65'.

**Design Review:** will only kick in for projects over 65' tall or 80,000 square feet that go through the Design Guidelines (65' is roughly equivalent to a six-story building) - You can see a good chart of this on page 23 in the Staff Report.

## **ADVOCACY TALKING POINTS**

**1) Visual Preference Survey + More community engagement.** Reduce barriers to participation. We're changing the entire look and feel of our city without ever asking the people who live here in a meaningful way. Extend the deadline for comments, add hearings and do a Visual Preference Survey that anyone can join.

**2) Advocate for a Lower Design Commission Review Trigger (40 feet)** for narrow Vintage Main Streets where the buildings, lots, and streets are small but impacts are great. We can still build to current code and add needed housing but with better results that engender more support for density if done well.

**3) Advocate for the "FUTURE WORK" staff has identified for Low Rise Vintage Main Streets** (from the staff report pages 52-53) as a priority for budget and planning staff NOW.

**4) Context Elevation** - Add a requirement for development project applicants to submit a Context Elevation and use PDX Main Streets Compatibility Criteria in the Design Guidelines for helping new development fit better as we grow.

**5) Support community led planning and recognize the PDX Main Streets Design Guidelines/Division Design Guidelines** (adopted by 7 neighborhood and business associations) over only top-down approaches from local governments

**6) Support for Main Street Design Standards – give points for relating to main street patterns** (such as: Base-Middle-Top, storefronts, treatment of all sides (no blank walls), human scale vertical windows)

**7) Support for an East Side Design Commission (or a Main Street Design Commission)**

**8) Support for upper level setbacks on narrow Main Streets** when new development is 2x the height of adjacent buildings. This maintains abundant density but helps new development fit with local context better.

