

# Design Overlay Zone Assessment

Planning and Sustainability Commission

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Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
Bureau of Development Services

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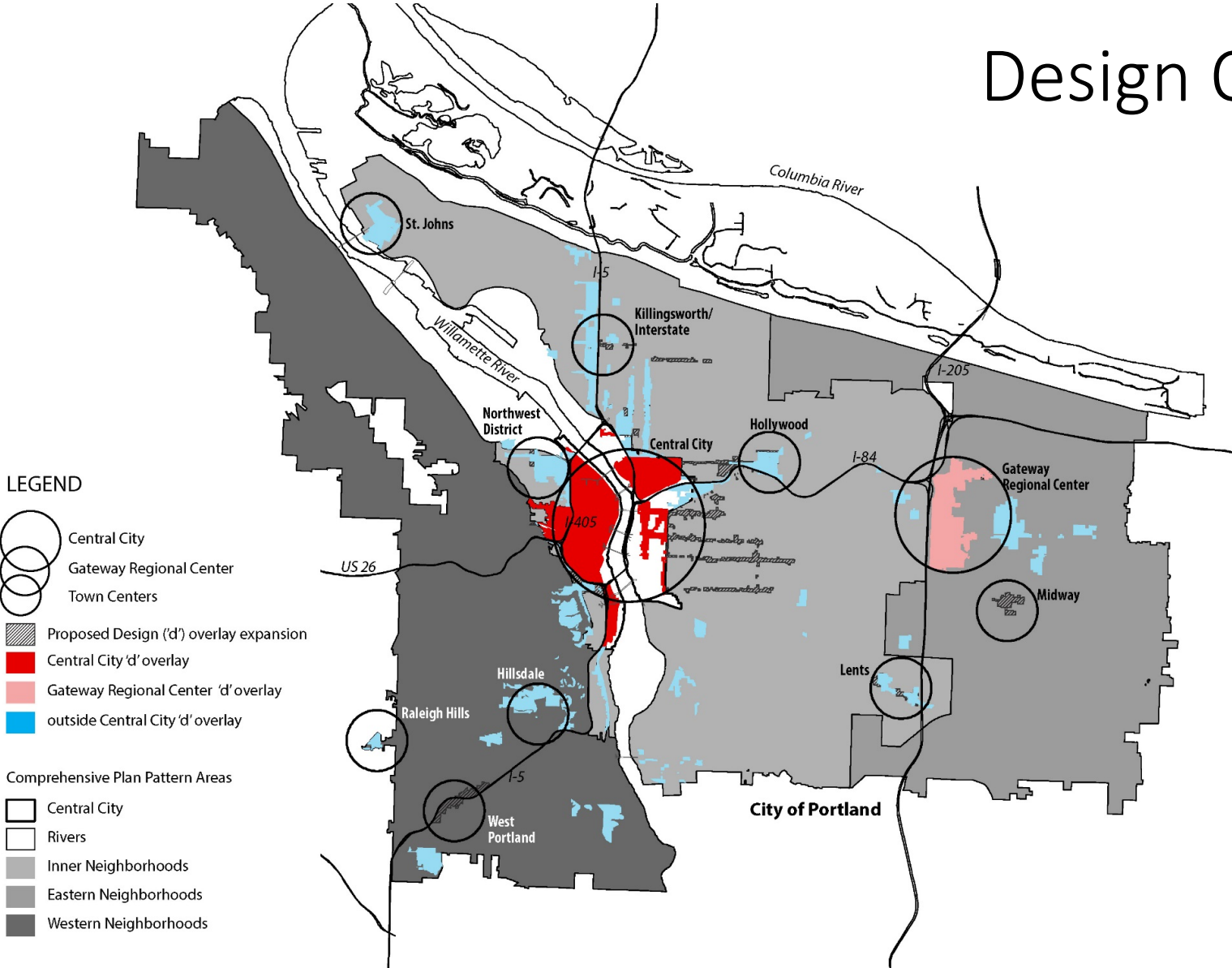
# Design Overlay Zone

The current **purpose** of **Design Overlay Zone (33.420)**

- For areas of the city with special scenic, architectural, or cultural value
- promotes conservation, enhancement, and vitality
- ensures that certain types of infill development will be compatible with the neighborhood and enhance the area
- promotes quality high-density development near transit stations



# Design Overlay Zone in Portland



# Design Overlay Zone Regulations

Two-Track System for projects within design overlay zone

## Discretionary **Design Review**

- Subjective; Requires judgement; flexibility
- Land Use Review
- Design **Guidelines**
- Public Comment and potential Hearing with Design Commission
- Required in Central City and Gateway

## Clear and Objective **Plan Check**

- Objective; Does not require judgement; limits flexibility
- Building Permit
- Design **Standards** in Code
- Limited public involvement
- Potential option everywhere else

# Example

## Design Guidelines

### **A8: Contribute to a Vibrant Experience**

- Integrate building setbacks with adjacent sidewalks to increase the space for potential public use.
- Develop visual and physical connections into buildings' active interior spaces from adjacent sidewalks.
- Use architectural elements such as atriums, grand entries and large ground-level windows to reveal important interior spaces and activities.

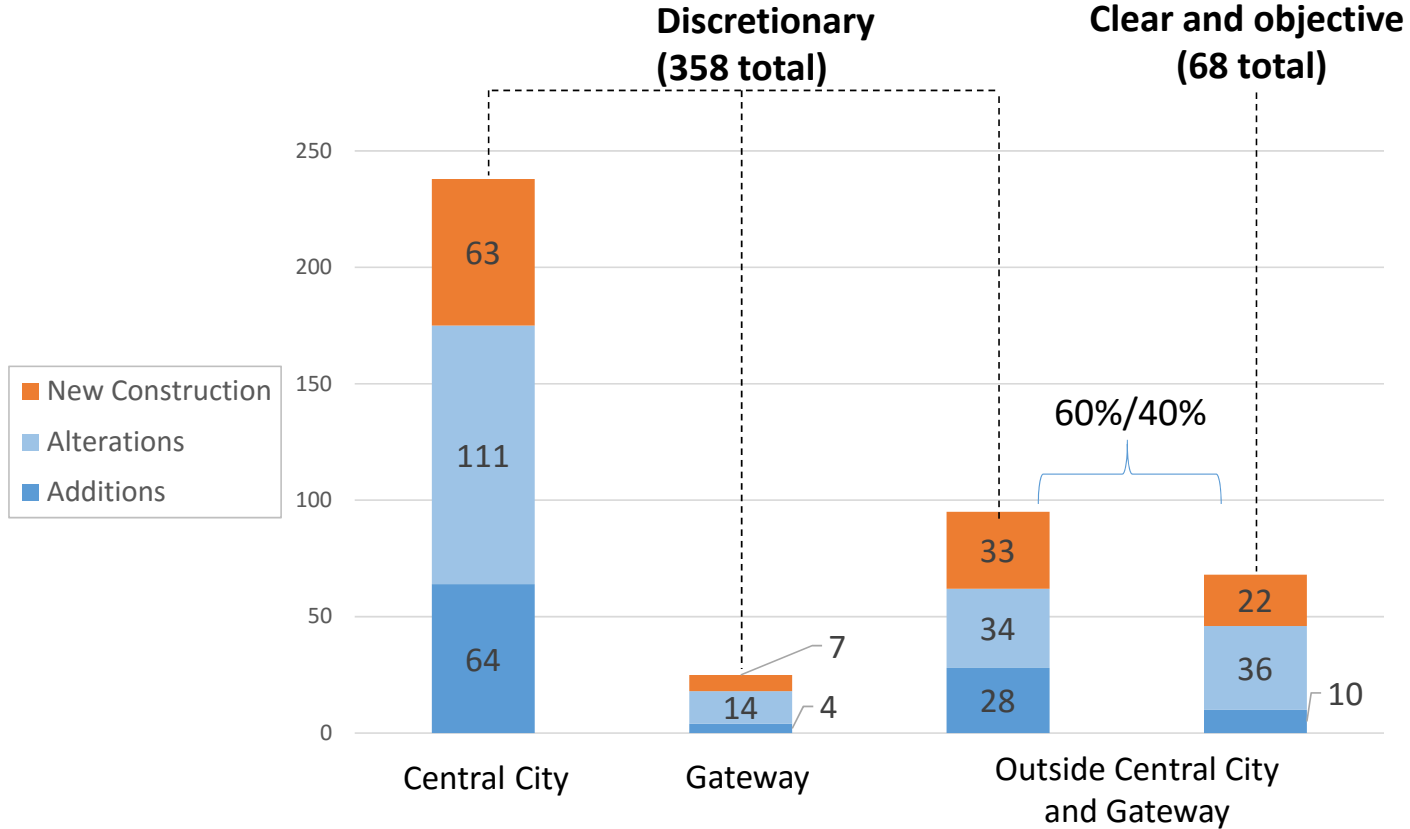
## Design Standards

### **33.218.140 B1c**

For each 100 square feet of hard-surface area between the building and the street lot line at least one of the following amenities must be provided. Structures built within 2 feet of the street lot line are exempt from the requirements of this subparagraph.

- (1) A bench or other seating;
- (2) A tree;
- (3) A landscape planter;
- (4) A drinking fountain; or
- (5) A kiosk.

# Discretionary vs. Clear and Objective 2013 – 2015





# What is DOZA?

## **Design Overlay Zone Assessment**

**Purpose:** To undertake an independent and comprehensive assessment of the City of Portland's design overlay zone and make recommendations

### **Questions:**

- How can design review evolve to better respond to the changing development environment?
- What improvements could be made to both the processes and tools to allow for the greatest benefit and least burden to all stakeholders?



# Planning and Sustainability Commission

## **DOZA Subcommittee**

Katherine Schultz, chair

Mike Houck

Eli Spevak

Gary Oxman

Teresa St Martin

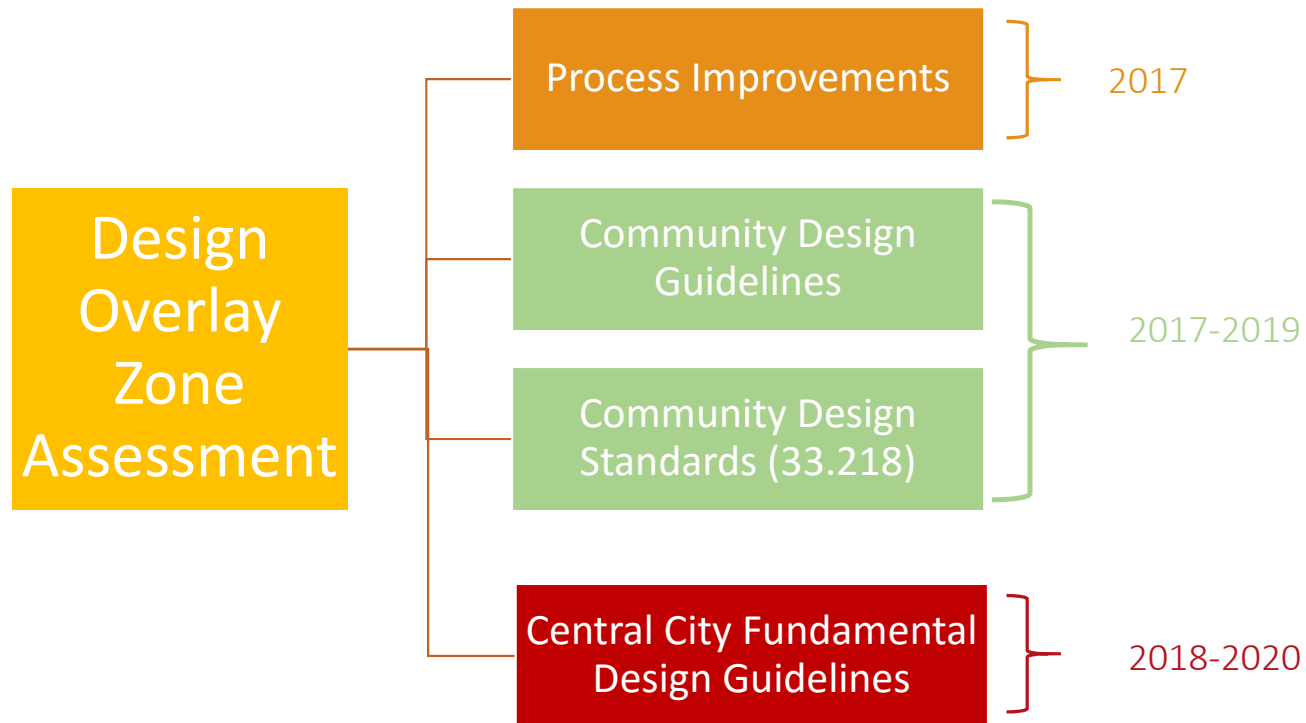




# DOZA | PROJECT TIMELINE



# Post DOZA Work Plan



**DESIGN OVERLAY ZONE ASSESSMENT (DOZA)**

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**OUTLINE OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

## A. PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS | OUTLINE

### 1. Adjust the thresholds for design review to provide a high level of review for larger projects in d-overlay districts but lessen the level of review for smaller projects.

- a. Restructure the thresholds based on two geographies: 1) Central City and 2) Neighborhoods: Inner, Western and Eastern – including Gateway.
- b. Modify thresholds for design review to reflect a tiered approach based on the magnitude of change

### 2. Improve the review processes with a charter, better management of meetings, and training for both the Design Commission and staff.

- a. Adopt a new charter for the Design Commission.
- b. Manage Commission meetings more effectively.
- c. Provide training for staff.
- d. Convene regular Design Commission retreats.

### 3. Align the City's review process with the design process.

- a. Organize the City's review process to correspond to a project's typical design process.
- b. Focus deliberations.
- c. Require DARs for Type III reviews for larger projects in the Central City.
- d. Expect a collaborative attitude from all participants.

### 4. Better communicate the role of urban design and the d-overlay tool.

- a. Improve public information and education.
- b. Hold applicant orientation "primers" on a regular basis.

### 5. Improve the public involvement system.

- a. Post large signs noting impending reviews.
- b. Increase mailed notices for Type II and Type III reviews.
- c. Require applicants to document community input.
- d. Ensure inclusivity in decision-making process.

### 6. Monitor and evaluate these amendments.

- a. Document where changes are occurring and what the impacts are. The analysis should be evaluated by BPS, BDS, Design Commission, and Planning and Sustainability.
- b. Formalize the annual reporting in the Design Commission's "State of Design".

### 7. Consider establishing more than one Design Commission following a period of evaluation.

## B. TOOLS RECOMMENDATIONS | OUTLINE

### 1. General | **Clarify and revise the purpose and scope of the d-overlay.**

- a. Revise the purpose statement for d-overlay to reflect current thinking.
- b. Simplify d-overlay terminology.
- c. Clarify the scope of design review.

### 2. General | **Sync the standards and guidelines.**

- a. Use a parallel structure for standards and guidelines.
- b. Combine the standards and guidelines into one document.
- c. Create a consistent format.
- d. Separate out historic review criteria.

### 3. General | **Use the three tenets of design to simplify, consolidate, and revise the standards and guidelines.**

- a. Respond to context.
- b. Elevate the public realm.
- c. Expand “quality and permanence”

### 4. General | **Broaden “base/middle/top” to encompass other design approaches.**

### 5. General | **Recognize the unique role of civic buildings in urban design.**

### 6. Community Design Standards:

**Ensure that the CDS add value to recently adopted base zoning codes.**

### 7. Community Design Standards

**Provide for optional ways of meeting standards.**

### 8. Community Design Standards

**Craft appropriate standards for the Gateway area.**

### 9. Community Design Guidelines

**In recrafting the Community Design Guidelines, recognize the changing nature of the city.**

### 10. Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines

**Collate special district design guidelines into one citywide set.**

### 11. Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines

**Revisit and simplify some of the guidelines.**

### 12. Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines

**Collate the subdistrict guidelines into the Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines.**