



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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MEMO

DATE: October 21, 2019

TO: Planning and Sustainability Commission and Design Commission

FROM: Lora Lillard, Phil Nameny and Sandra Wood

SUBJECT: DOZA – Response to Questions from October 8, 2019 Briefing

This memo provides responses to some unanswered questions from the Commissioners at the end of the briefing on the Design Overlay Zone Amendments (DOZA) project on October 8, 2019. In the interest of time, staff does not plan on sharing these responses at our next meeting, but we'd be happy to discuss them if Commissioners want to.

Question 1

Commissioner Larsell: This is a big systemic change. I was wondering if you have measures for once DOZA is in place to see how it's working. Looking at the threshold diagram, I'm curious about how many projects go through each pathway and how that would change in the future.

BPS Response: When City Council adopts changes to regulations, they often request that monitoring and reporting efforts be included in future workplans. In addition, BPS staff keeps a database of code-related issues that can be entered by city staff and the public to potentially address as part of a future Regulatory Improvement Code Amendment Package.

Thresholds could be worth monitoring because there isn't necessarily a direct correlation between a project cost (current threshold) and its size (proposed threshold). However, several cases offer examples where the threshold table may create a lower level of review including:

- Smaller Central City projects, such as smaller buildings or exterior alterations, which currently trigger a Type III Design Review with the Design Commission, will now go through a Type II staff review.
- Outside of Central City, new commercial development between 20,000-40,000 square feet will have the option to use design standards (objective plan check track) instead of going through discretionary design review, which is currently required for projects greater than 20,000 square feet.



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- Alterations and new development in Gateway under 35 feet tall will now have the option to use design standards (objective plan check track) instead of going through discretionary design review.
- Small residential development and alterations and additions to small residential development, defined as four units or fewer and under 35 feet tall, will now be exempt from design review or design standards.
- Small alterations to the facade of buildings outside of the Central City that affect no more than 200 square feet of the total facade are now exempt.

The following types of development may be subject to a higher level of review than what is currently seen:

- All new development outside of the Central City that is taller than 65 feet or larger than 80,000 square feet will now go through a Type III Design Review with the Design Commission (it currently varies, but most of these go through a Type II with staff, depending on the area).

Question 2

Commissioner Larsell: In terms of using character for neighborhoods, they are changing, particularly in East Portland. Those neighborhoods do need some character statement to see what they want to be.

BPS Response: The proposed Portland Citywide Design Guidelines 01 and 02 are meant to work together to guide development in its context. Design Guideline 01 uses the Urban Design Framework to promote the desired future of the place, especially where established context is suburban and more car-friendly than people-friendly. Design Guideline 02 encourages applicants, decision-makers and the public to look to desired characteristics of what is on the ground today, taking inspiration from the community, nature and architecture. These sources of inspiration will vary pending on geography.

The idea of the character statements is that they would add more specificity to Design Guideline 02, but without them, these two guidelines and the base zone requirements should point new development towards building on context. While the standards are a little more general, they include regulations specific to certain geographies and current or future contexts. For example, the recent Better Housing by Design project is adding a deep rear setback requirement in multi-dwelling base zones for projects in East Portland. This keeps the centers of blocks greener, with more open space, consistent with the context of that area.

Question 3

Commissioner Bortolazzo: In terms of the alignment with City review process (slide 27), it seems to imply you could get to a land use review hearing sooner than pre-DOZA. Are you able to quantify this reduction?

BPS Response: In short, no. The proposals encourage a more streamlined process by limiting the Design Advice Request (DAR) to one and requiring that DARs be held within 56 days from receiving a complete application, and it keeps the DAR as an option for the applicant. However, it remains an applicant's decision to determine when to start the DAR process or submit the Land Use Review application.



Question 4

Commissioner Vallaster: As far are the relationship between the two Commissions, can there be more broad discussions and outreach at the PSC that have a big impact on the community, but that DC doesn't have purview over (e.g. FAR)?

BPS Response: This requires a combination of outreach and education efforts that can be made by both Bureaus. BDS has already created several documents that work to get the message out at Design Commission meetings. There are additional educational opportunities to build public capacity to learn when base policy decisions are made (area height and FAR limits) and what factors can be considered project by project (for Adjustments, Conditional Uses, Design or Historic Reviews). This is an ongoing administrative improvement.

Question 5

Commissioner Routh: I'd love to talk about the menu of options [in the Design Standards] and information about the weighting and methodology for things that may not have made this list.

BPS Response: Design Standards were initially weighed by our consultant team during the Discussion Draft using the following variables: cost, how applicable is the requirement by the scale of the project, and what is its value (how important is the requirement). Cost and applicability by scale of the project were determined by our consultant team, and staff and the consultant team collaborated on the value. The number of points were tested with the public during the Discussion Draft, and since that period, we have added several new standards and consolidated standards after hearing public feedback. The original table that was used to create the point system is outdated and the numbering is no longer valid, but it looked like this:

Standard	Applicability by Scale			COST	VALUE
	Small	Medium	Large		
	<30 units / 30,000 SF	30-120 units / 30- 120,000 sf	>120 Units / 120,000 sf		
2B-2		X	X	\$\$	3
2A-2			X	\$\$	3
2B-3	X	X	X	\$	2
2C-1	X	X	X	\$	2



We currently don't have a full list of what ended up on the "cutting-room" floor but the following are some examples:

- Combining a variety of standards related to the street corner into C1;
- Combining two utility location standards (one required, one point based) into a single required standard with options;
- Removing a requirement for seating near a bus stop (since the stop is in the right-of-way); and
- Removing a standard requiring flat roofs on taller buildings on civic corridors.

We also added several items, including those encouraging commercial and affordable commercial space, and additional sustainable standards to encourage solar energy systems and to provide an environmental assessment for a building.

Question 6

Chair Schultz: About neighborhoods and character, the same things applied to design districts – it will be confusing to have things running parallel time-wise. We're just adding confusion to a system that is already confusing. There's been conversation on the PSC about height being discretionary or not. I'd like to see something about why it's still discretionary so we can decide if it's a discussion item or not.

BPS Response: The Citywide Design Guidelines replace the *Community Design Guidelines* for areas that currently don't have their own set of guidelines. The existing *Community Design Guidelines* and the standards in 33.218 will only be applicable in certain historic areas (conservation districts and landmarks, and the Alphabet Historic District). As described in Section 5 of Volume 1, future work plans include addressing the other design guidelines that apply in certain districts to potentially update them or combine them with the proposed tools.

We are proposing that height remains a building element that can be considered under Design Review because it is a significant determiner of context and it is not always directly related to an area's floor area ratio (FAR). This is especially true in the Central City where one can often find a maximum FAR of 6 to 9 stories of floor area, but a height limit of 250-feet (20+ stories). Therefore, full build-out (full utilization of FAR) could result in buildings with a range of heights. We propose that the height be part of the design discussion. In areas where the height limit and FAR are more closely related, we anticipate that there will be fewer discussions about height because those would lead to potential reductions in FAR, which we propose not be part of the design discussion.

