

November 11, 2019

To: PSC Members

From: Mike Houck

Re: Comments on DOZA Volume 3, Portland Citywide Design Guidelines

Inasmuch as we on the PSC are being asked to submit our feedback to the Design Commission I felt it might be helpful to send you my preliminary thoughts for the Nov 12 work session.

City built for people: While I do not dispute that design guidelines are largely about creating vibrant pleasant spaces for people, I would urge the PSC to add, "...in harmony with Nature.....to the statements on page 3 Introduction, Building a City Designed for People, In Harmony With Nature. Same suggestion on page 4....."The purpose of the Design overlay zone...is to strengthen Portland as a city designed for people, in harmony with nature.

Page 15, 01: Eastern Neighborhoods, it's good to see reference to strengthen views of the buttes. However, given the importance of conifer stands in East Portland is there a potential conflict with preserving views of the buttes and retention of the urban forest canopy? I would suggest the following....."strengthen views of the area's skyline of buttes while ensuring protection of the areas urban forest canopy."

Page 15, Rivers:

New development should recognize, enhance, and protect the historic, natural resource, and multi-cultural significance of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers by strengthening access, including active transportation connections between neighborhoods and the rivers and public trails.

Development within the Rivers pattern area should protect, restore, and enhance the rivers' ecological roles as locally and regionally significant habitat for fish and wildlife."

Page 22, 02: Build On The Character And Local Identity Of The Place: I strongly support the lead in paragraph.

Page 23, I strongly support the "Nature" statement on Page 23, with a couple additions: "Reflecting, protecting, restoring, and enhancing local natural resources such as rivers, streams, buttes, and native vegetation.

How are the character and local identity defined?

Site and area observations: I like the language here, particularly integration.

However, I worry that oftentimes "integration" occurs with loss of natural values.

I would word, "...what key characteristics can be integrated into the new development, while respecting the resources ecological function?"

Designated historic and natural resources: Identification is passive. I'd like to see a more active statement such as, "Identify designated historic and natural resources in close proximity and design the development to protect and complement those resources"

Page 24: The Multnomah Village Tryon Headwaters project is an excellent example of integrating and protecting, and expanding natural resources through stream daylighting and creation of additional stormwater wetlands in what was formerly a disused poorly designed intersection.

Page 30: 04: Integrate And Enhance On-Site Features And Opportunities To Meaningfully Contribute To A Location's Uniqueness: I like the words enhance and meaningfully.

I also like the third paragraph: I would suggest the following addition: On sloped sites, integrating existing vegetated slopes and topography into the site design helps retain and respond to the natural landform. Incorporating natural resources, such as ~~large~~ trees, streams, wetlands, rocky outcrops, or other geological features, while protecting, restoring, and enhancing the natural resources' ecological function, preserves resources while rooting development specifically to a site.

I suggest striking large with regard to trees. Without a definition I fear the continued loss of urban forest canopy. I doubt there is support to define what a large tree is in the context of design guidelines.

PP 34-37: 05: Design The Sidewalk Level Of Buildings To Be Comfortable, Pleasant And Human Scale: There is no mention of trees, which I consider crucial to "pleasantness" of a streetscape.

Page 38: 06, Provide Opportunities To Pause, Sit and Interact: "Along the Willamette River Greenway, development should also offer places to sit and enjoy the river and trail, providing opportunities that help contribute to a vibrant waterfront." The word vibrant is more often than not used as a rationale to remove riparian vegetation along the Willamette River Greenway, particularly the South Reach. If vibrant is retained I would add: "Along the Willamette River Greenway, development should also offer places to sit and enjoy the river and trail, providing opportunities that help contribute to a vibrant waterfront, while protecting riparian vegetation and the rivers' ecological function."

Page 54, 10 Design For Resilience, Health And Stewardship Of The Environment, Ensuring Adaptability To Climate Change And The Evolving Needs Of The City: Opening paragraph is excellent. Good to see the following: "...will

support a city designed for people and protection of our climate and planet.” I would add, “...will support a city designed for people, in harmony with nature, and protection of our climate and planet.” As per my comment on the introduction.

Fourth paragraph, excellent: Suggested change, “Site designs should protect, restore, enhance and incorporate existing trees (glad to see “large” not included), native vegetation, rivers, streams, wetlands, and other natural features.”

The rest of the language is excellent as well.

Page 55: Design Approaches: Good to see with Ecoroofs, the words and/or with regard to ecoroofs and solar panels. Research at PSU has demonstrated that solar panels are actually more efficient when paired with an ecoroof. Good to see reference to people and pollinators with ecoroofs. Good to see reference to Native landscaping; Bird-Safe design; On-Site Stormwater.

Respectfully
Mike Houck, PSC member