

Michelle Schulz

#309628 | May 12, 2021

Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Design Overlay Zone Amendments, Recommended Draft**

Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners, Thank you for your time and commitment to our City. I am providing written testimony to support what I see as positive changes to the Design Review process that have come through the proposed DOZA amendments to Design Review. As an Architect in the City, I have prepared for and participated in a number of Design Review Commission hearings throughout my 20+ years of practice. The DR process prior to the assessment and DOZA amendments was extremely challenging to navigate, and very unpredictable in nature. Our clients rely on our ability to understand the City's design requirements, and to design buildings that work within them so that we can efficiently and effectively entitle our work. However, my experience with Design Commission hearings prior to DOZA was anything but predictable or reliable. Creating excessing amounts of design iterations, a multitude of hearings, and a process that greatly impacted the timelines and cost for development projects in our City. However, my most recent project experience going through Design Review was greatly improved. The process is more efficient, the commission are focused on assessment based on guidelines and not personal opinion, and required documentation is more clearly defined. As a steward of design, I understand and appreciate the need for the Design Review process to help ensure quality design of our City. On our most recent project, we struggled to work with grade changes on our site that were creating elevated glazing above the pedestrian realm. However, working in collaboration with our client and City staff prior to our hearing, we were able to find a design solution that better engaged the surrounding site and created a richer pedestrian interface. Which in the end allowed our team to complete our Design Review process for two buildings, with two height options, in a single hearing. With the revised DOZA timelines for Design Review hearings happening earlier on in the design process, our work is now better aligned with the timing of review and input so that we can adjust and modify the design more affordably and efficiently. The revisions DOZA has implemented in the Design Review process are much improved from the process in years past. Thank you.

Testimony is presented without formatting.