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

I urge DOZA to reduce the 75-foot height standard proposed for specific design review. This too-high threshold precludes streets like Hawthorne and Division from feedback that facilitates community-building compatible with existing buildings. One size does not fit all along Southeast's established commercial corridors. Design should not be considered a restrictive, pejorative word. I covered DOZA and infill issues for many years for a local paper. It became increasingly apparent that many longtime Portlanders' voices were being discounted and misrepresented as anti-growth and change. False narratives now claim that design reviews are elitist, discriminatory tools. Not so. Good growth consists of thoughtful, affordable planning that encourages sound, environmental-friendly communities. Positive interactions and gatherings among diverse neighbors can be facilitated by people-friendly, cost-effective elements like setbacks, areas open to sunlight and design that complements existing neighborhoods and supports how residents actually live. Design that embraces community is basic for a vital, well-functioning city. It is also the core tenet of PDX Main Street Design Group's tools for commercial corridors like Hawthorne and Division. The group's standards, years in the making, promote design standards and planning that are inclusive and accessible to all Portlanders. I encourage DOZA to adopt the PDX Main Street design standards recommendations for lowering height thresholds in order for specific design reviews of commercial buildings on the Southeast side.

Testimony is presented without formatting.