

KAMAL BELKHAYAT

#309676 | May 12, 2021

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

ATTN: Portland City Council 5/12/21 RE: City Council Policy Hearing About New Citywide Design Policy Testimony Dear Portland City Council Members, My name is Kamal Belkhat I have lived in Portland since 1999. I earned a Masters Degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering and have learned thoroughly about the various impacts of climate change on the livelihood and prosperity of our community regionally as well as globally. I currently serve on the Board of the RNA. I joined the RNA because I believe that being involved in my community is paramount to address concerns shared by our community as well because I became aware of some dysconnectivity between City program implementations and resident perspectives on how the City manages those programs. I have witnessed our city develop through the years in good as well bad ways. I am testifying today because I believe that all decisions taken by the City are directly connected to how we address the many dangerous results of climate change. Namely, the design, engineering and the construction practices aspects of development are directly linked to how we can manage climate change. We have many opportunities to alleviate the negative and disastrous impacts of climate change and I believe this is one of them. I became aware of DOZA thanks to our land use committee at RNA and have since been paying attention to how the City has been managing development. I have also been exposed to the Design and guidelines adopted by NAs such as those developed by PDX Main streets. Learning that the City has a climate action plan does reinforce the hope that I have for a livable future. On other hand, Certain city practices do not; they help reduce hope for the future. I am a father to a two year old daughter and the uncertainties of her future are accumulating everyday. The amount of inaction is fueling an unreasonable amount of certainty. Some days I really feel like giving up because of what I witness in the community. The number one priority for the city is to manage resources and to communicate that concept to all aspects of its business including how development takes place. There should be no apprehension by the City to examine the design standards and guidelines specifically because they help address sound development with regard to how we impact climate change as well our livable future. While I am confident that folks within the City do care about climate change but the actions and programs the City develops sometimes do not reflect that and what use is it to develop an action plan that is pivotal to our mere survival if we do not take concrete action to implement it. I urge our City to consider these efforts furnished by these non-profits who are supported by the various Neighborhood Associations and ask you to question the motive of the folks who are attempting to introduce them as “Not In My Back Yard” folks. Please review programs and projects with purpose to alleviate climate

change. After all, what good is spending all the energy that we are if we have no future to live in and no hope to get there. Thank you. Kamal Belkhatat.

Testimony is presented without formatting.