

May 14, 2021

To:

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Mayor Ted Wheeler (mayorwheeler@portlandoregon.gov)

Commissioner Carmen Rubio (Comm.Rubio@portlandoregon.gov)

Commissioner Dan Ryan (CommissionerRyanOffice@portlandoregon.gov)

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty (joann@portlandoregon.gov)

Commissioner Mingus Mapps (Mappsoffice@portlandoregon.gov)

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (bps@portlandoregon.gov)

The Portland Design Commission (bds@portlandoregon.gov)

From:

Karl von Frieling

311 NW 12th Avenue #1502

Portland OR 97209

Re: The DOZA Project and Amendments

My name is Karl von Frieling and I reside in the Pearl District (311 NW 12th Avenue) in Portland.

I have preoccupied myself with current, progressive urban design ideas over the past few years, especially as they relate to Portland and the potential negative effects of the 2035 Central City Plan, with which I have familiarized myself.

Having listened attentively to the more than 40 people who testified at the virtual DOZA hearing on May 12th, I should like to make the following comments:

- Many of the speakers, especially those from “Portland Neighbors Welcome” seem committed to preventing any Design-overlay of new construction in the districts in question. Their focus is building the largest number of units as quickly as possible, wherever a need is indicated, without regard to context, good design or livability.

- In my opinion, this would be a major error, especially as it relates to increasing affordable housing. People living in affordable housing should have the same right to good design, which can be built on a budget and still reflect good, contextual design.
- The conceptual error that the DOZA committee wants to finalize is that it will formally prohibit any reduction in the floor area ratio (FAR) or height of a project, if they are otherwise allowed in the zone, as part of design review. This means that in no case will surrounding natural, historic, or cultural resource compatibility concerns or infrastructure carrying capacity limitations, such as roads or designated bicycle routes, ever restrict the height or density below what the base zone allows.
- World leading urban planners and architects are working on “Smart Cities and Soft Cities”, abandoning conventional high-rises which cluster large numbers of residents with little possibility of appropriate social engagement.
- The new form of urbanism called “Dense -Low” is an architectural movement balancing individualism and the shared ideas and needs of residents. Dense-Low projects radically reduce scale and celebrate both individuality and community. **Jan Gehl Architects in Copenhagen are leading proponents of achieving density without building high!**
- Another impressive example comes from Barcelona: Guallart Architects of Barcelona have won a major competition to design a new Chinese city in Herbei Province, South of Beijing, creating a city with net zero energy consumption and self-reliant food and other life essentials – without any high rises in the mix.
- The India Basin Project in San Francisco is a new district under development in the Bay area. The pedestrian-first, human scale, bicycle friendly, residential village is a public-private project accommodating 1600 housing units, 200,000 square feet of commercial space and 1,800 parking spaces. There are no high rises planned for this project.
- Portland’s “Residential Infill project – RIP” incorporates many of the above ideas which are being successfully promoted and built in other cities. These ideas should be the concepts which should be integrated into the DOZA program going forward.

- Compact human scale, low-rise density, which is less expensive to build and more attractive to inhabit, should be the goal of DOZA going forward.

Thank you for your attention to the DOZA project. Please expand your ideas to incorporate the most progressive new urban planning, highly sustainable concepts mentioned above.

Sincerely,

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