



City of Portland

Design Commission

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Date: 03/15/2018
To: Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
From: Portland Design Commission
Re: Better Housing by Design – Discussion Draft Summary

The Portland Design Commission appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Better Housing by Design – Discussion Draft Summary. The Commission's comments are focused on items that have import to the work Design Commission does on behalf of Council.

1. Proposal 10. Reduce Parking Requirements, Especially on Small Sites

- Parking requirements are proposed to be reduced while housing density is increased. This will likely cause an increase in the amount of testimony we hear regarding parking. Because this is such a contentious issue that is outside of our purview, we request that someone from BPS be available during land use hearings to explain the zoning code process, the reasons behind reducing parking requirements and to provide general education regarding the issue to members of the community who are in attendance for this purpose.

2. Proposal 21 – Require Transportation and Parking Demand Management approaches in the multi-dwelling zones

- Transportation demand management and parking demand should be part of a broader discussion that includes vehicle sharing, on-demand vehicles, bike share, etc...as these together have a significant effect on the pedestrian experience and often compete for limited space.

3. Proposal 8 – Allow Alternatives to Conventional Landscaping

- If innovative types of green features are to be allowed to count toward meeting required landscaping, we recommend that the current requirements for these be revised to ensure that they continue to perform the same functions that landscape areas are currently required to perform. Also, we recommend that only a fraction of required landscaping that is required at pedestrian level be allowed to include innovative green features that occur at other levels. This will ensure that the pedestrian realm continues to include landscape areas and is more consistent with current Guidelines.

4. Proposal 2 – Require 20 percent of units to be “visitable” for projects exceeding one unit per 2,000 sf. Of site area

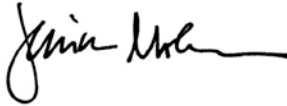
- While we agree with the intent of this requirement, accessibility issues are extensively covered with federal and state requirements as well as current building codes (Note that a similar requirement already exists through the Fair Housing Act).
- Additional zoning requirements have the potential to negatively impact the pedestrian realm where project sites have even a minor grade change. Some of the possible impacts include:
 1. Numerous long ramps in front/side setbacks. Based on current ADA requirements, a grade change of 5ft (typical for many parts of the city) requires 60ft of ramp at 1:12 slope with an intermediate landing.
 2. Overall reduced coherency. Portions of developments meeting this requirement will likely having a unique massing or building form compared to the rest of the development in order to accommodate the change in grade.
- We recommend that this be more closely studied in order to ensure that the result is a positive response to Guidelines.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments,

Julie Livingston, Chair

Tad Savinar, Vice Chair

Andrew Clarke



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Sam Rodriguez



Don Vallaster

Portland Design Commission

Cc: BDS staff