

DESIGN COMMISSION

State of the City Report - 2024

- What we do.
- History of Portland Development
- Citywide Design Guidelines
- Recent code changes
- People: Design Commission
- People: PP&D Staff
- Portland's Exciting Future
- 2024 Stats
- Excellent project 2024
- Significant projects 2023-2024



State of the City 2024

Design Commission - What We Do.

The Design Commission provides leadership and expertise on urban design and architecture and advances the purpose of the Design overlay zone. We meet 2-3 thursdays a month to review projects submitted for Design Advice Requests (DAR), Land Use Reviews (LUR Hearings) and design Briefings on major projects in the city.

*The **Portland Citywide Design Guidelines** and **Code** are our primary tools of review:*

- Response to the architectural **CONTEXT** surrounding the project
- Treatment of the **PUBLIC REALM** of the city
- Use of **QUALITY** materials that will support **RESILIENCE** and permanence in the city

Our purpose is to maintain a consistent quality of design that ensures the public has a voice and projects have a positive impact on the life of the city.

State of the City 2024

History of Portland Development

After WWII we lost our way in the surge of automobile ownership and changing living and travel patterns. We tore down historic buildings to make surface parking lots.

We cleared neighborhoods for Urban Renewal and built highways along our waterfront.

We abandoned transit and became an air quality nonattainment area resulting in a warning from the Federal government to either clean up our air or lose all Federal transportation funding.



State of the City 2024

History of Portland Development

When we did build new office buildings downtown, we forgot how buildings make streets feel inviting and safe - instead we built fortresses.



State of the City 2024

History of Portland Development

Public and private sector leaders recognized the negative trends, came together to stop the deterioration and to develop a vision going forward. The result was the **1972 Downtown Plan**: a reset that called for mixed uses, public investment in place-making and public open space, culture, arts, public transportation, higher education and incentives to encourage renovation of historic properties.

Out of that bold plan came the **Transit Mall**, a cap on downtown parking, **Waterfront Park** and the removal of Harbor Drive. **Pioneer Square**, new housing downtown, historic districts and importantly, the **Design Review process in 1982**.



State of the City 2024

History of Portland Development

With a new vision, over the last 40 years, we have built a walkable, vibrant, diverse and easily accessible Central City that is admired for its planning and design innovation.

But worldwide and local events of the past 5 years have been very tough on Portland. However, now is the time we need to uncover the city, clean it off, recommit to manage/ program/ maintain the great legacy we have and use Design Review to shape excellence in the future development that will reinforce that legacy.



State of the City 2024

History of Portland Development - Design Review Today

HOW AND WHY DESIGN REVIEW MATTERS TO PORTLAND NOW

These are unusual times - rising crime, homelessness, rapidly rising housing costs and still a shortage of housing. Yet Portland's economy remains strong and development continues, albeit at a slower pace.

Crime - we know from 40 years of design review that active ground floor uses, high transparency, visibility and a mix of uses with day and night activity - all contribute to a sense of safety and place that feels inviting.

Homelessness and equity - major efforts are underway to address Portland's significant homelessness and urban camping issues. Production of new affordable housing is a component of that effort.

Design Review's role is to ensure, while we accelerate production of new housing, that we also maintain the good design characteristics that make Portland a great place to live, work, learn and play. Quality of life in one's physical surroundings should be universal.

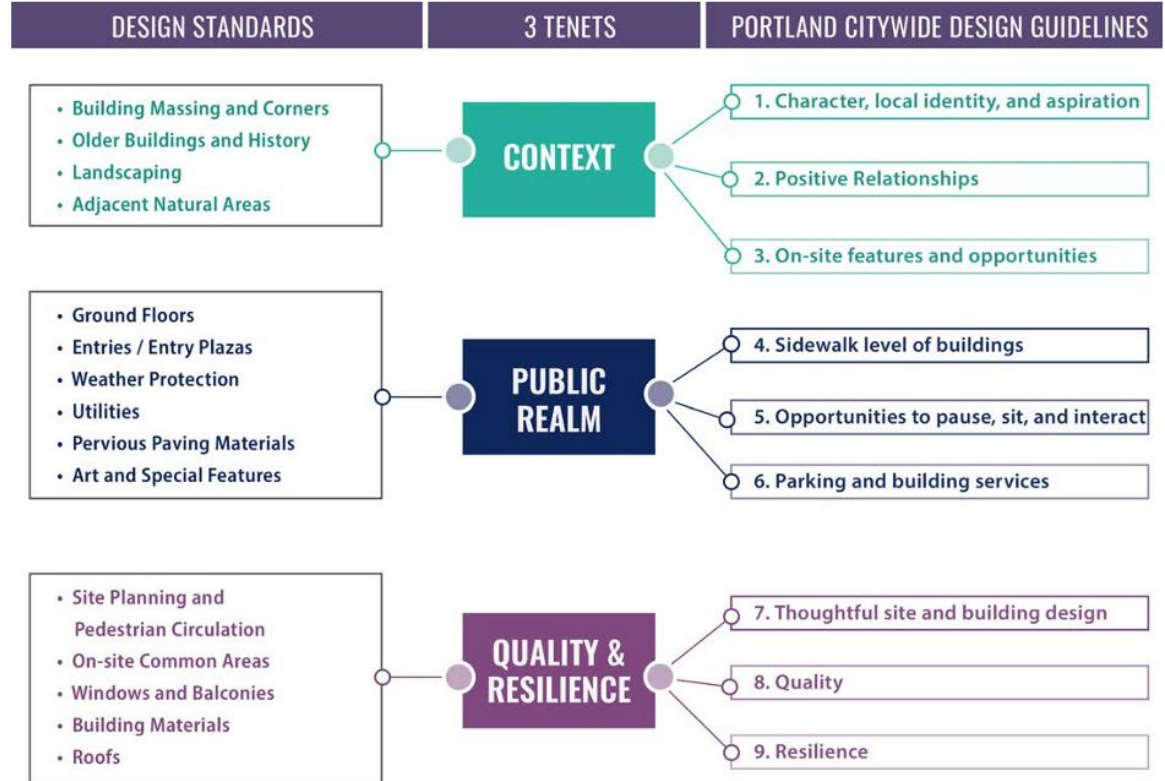
State of the City 2024

Portland Citywide Design Guidelines - Adopted by City Council 2021

The Design Commission evaluates projects based on the 3 tenets of **CONTEXT**, **PUBLIC REALM** and **QUALITY + RESILIENCE**.

Design Guidelines are mandatory approval criteria for all projects in the Central City. We evaluate if a project resonates with the context it is located in, if it enhances the public realm and improves the pedestrian experience, and if the project uses quality materials and addresses building resilience.

All of these guidelines are to guide projects into keeping Portland's streets active, safe and beautiful.



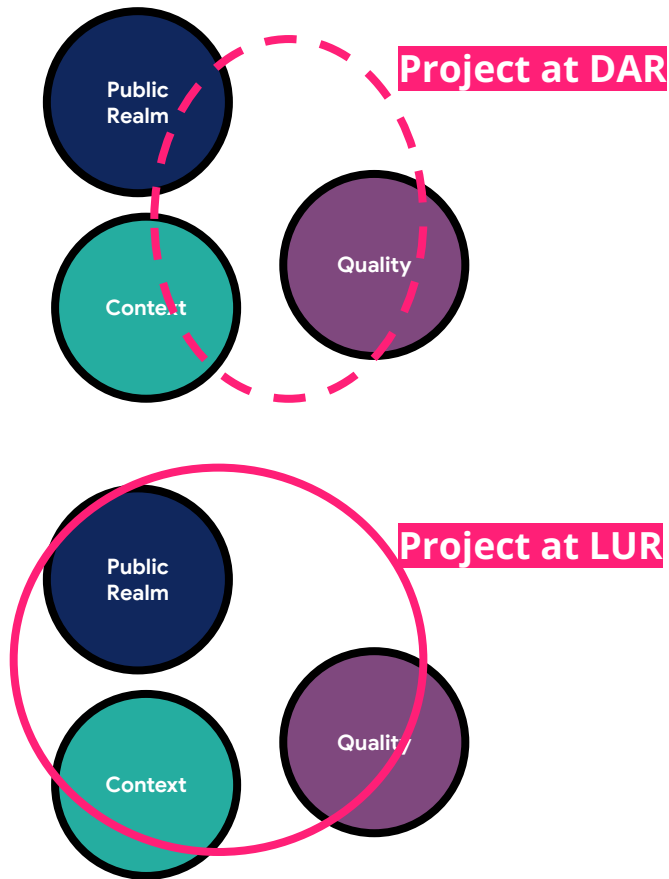
State of the City 2024

How Design Review is Flexible

Every site and every proposed development program are unique. **Zoning codes try to anticipate a variety of conditions, but do not always fit perfectly with many projects.**

Design Review allows discretion for any project's needed flexibility. When a project's overall design, on balance, better meets the intent of the guidelines and the purpose statement of the code standards, design review can grant modifications. The modifications can be to development standards, or be the alternate path to design standards that require strict compliance with the code.

It's a win-win for applicants and community.



State of the City 2024

Recent code amendments impacting development processes

Development is essential to the prosperity of the city and over the past few years there have been significant changes to the code that have reduced the number and types of projects coming through Design Review.

As these changes are significant, it is very important to track results of projects using the revised standards.

Outcomes from DOZA, HACP and HRRP should be evaluated empirically to see if they are improving processes as intended.



Regulatory Improvement Code Amendment Package 10 (RICAP 10)

Proposed Draft

February 2024
portland.gov/ricap10



Housing Adjustment Compliance Project To address Senate Bill 1537

Adopted Report – Ordinance 191942

Effective January 1, 2025
Portland.gov/bps/planning/housing-adjustments



Housing Regulatory Relief Project

Adopted Report – Ordinance 191609

Effective March 1, 2024
portland.gov/bps/planning/housing-regulatory-relief



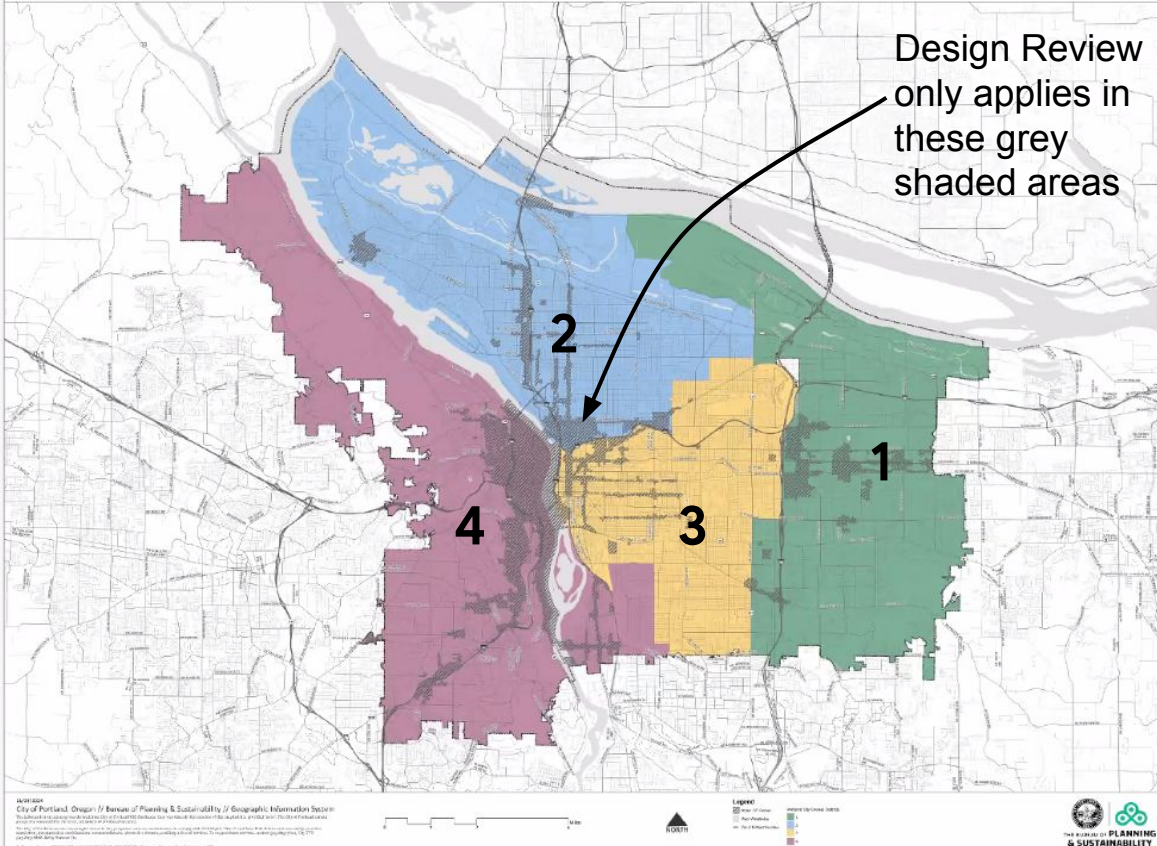
Deregulation can help make development easier, but it is subsidies, fee waivers, and tax incentives that determine whether a project will be built or not in this economic climate.

The Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) is a great example of a policy in action today.

State of the City 2024

Portland's Districts

City Council Districts, Design Overlay



The (d) Design overlay exists in each of Portland's Districts. That means projects along major corridors, main streets + high development areas are required to go through a design review process.

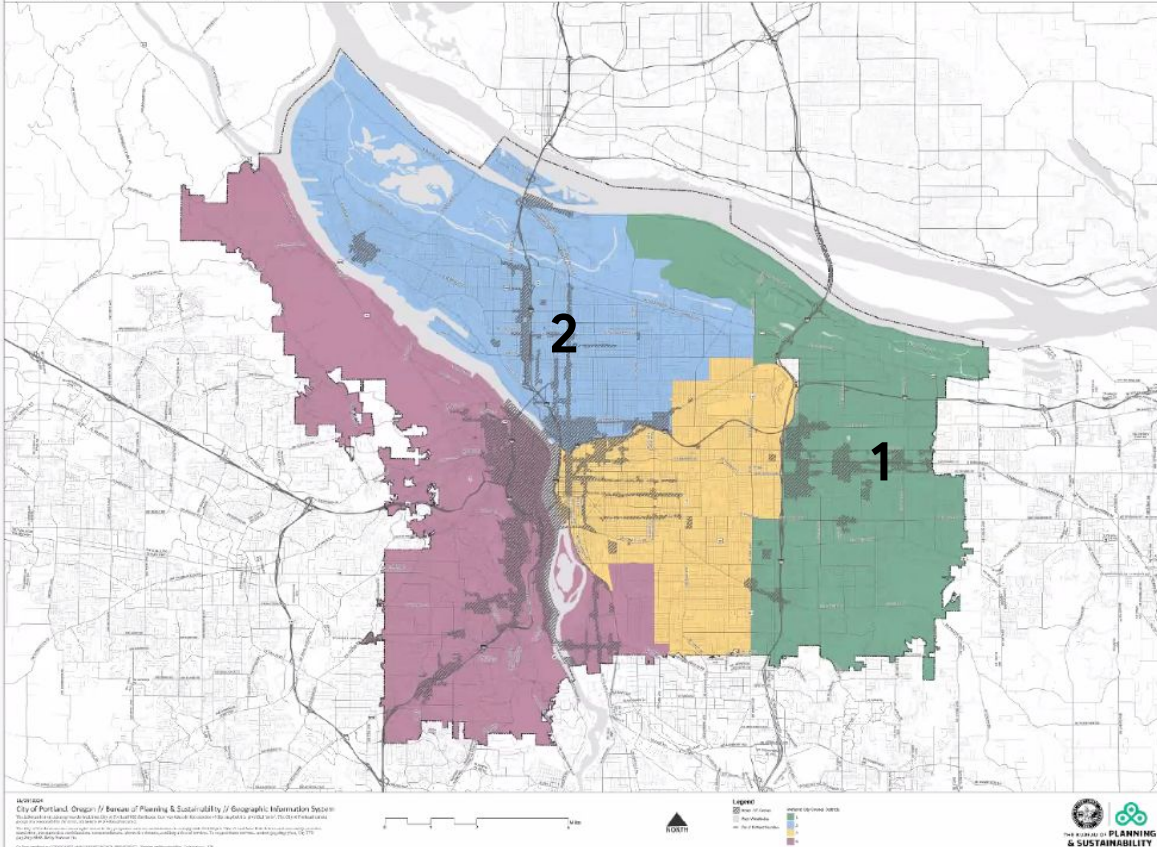
The process allows the public to provide testimony on development in their neighborhoods and let developers and the city know what are priorities for them.

Our purpose is to protect the public interest through evaluation of projects based on the city's Design Guidelines: Context, Public Realm, Quality + Resilience

State of the City 2024

Projects that have gone through Design Review in your District

City Council Districts, Design Overlay



District 1
East Corridor Housing

Issues resolved through design review: Added Juliette balconies to add more articulation in the facade and break down the large mass of the building. Added layered landscaping to protect privacy of ground floor units.



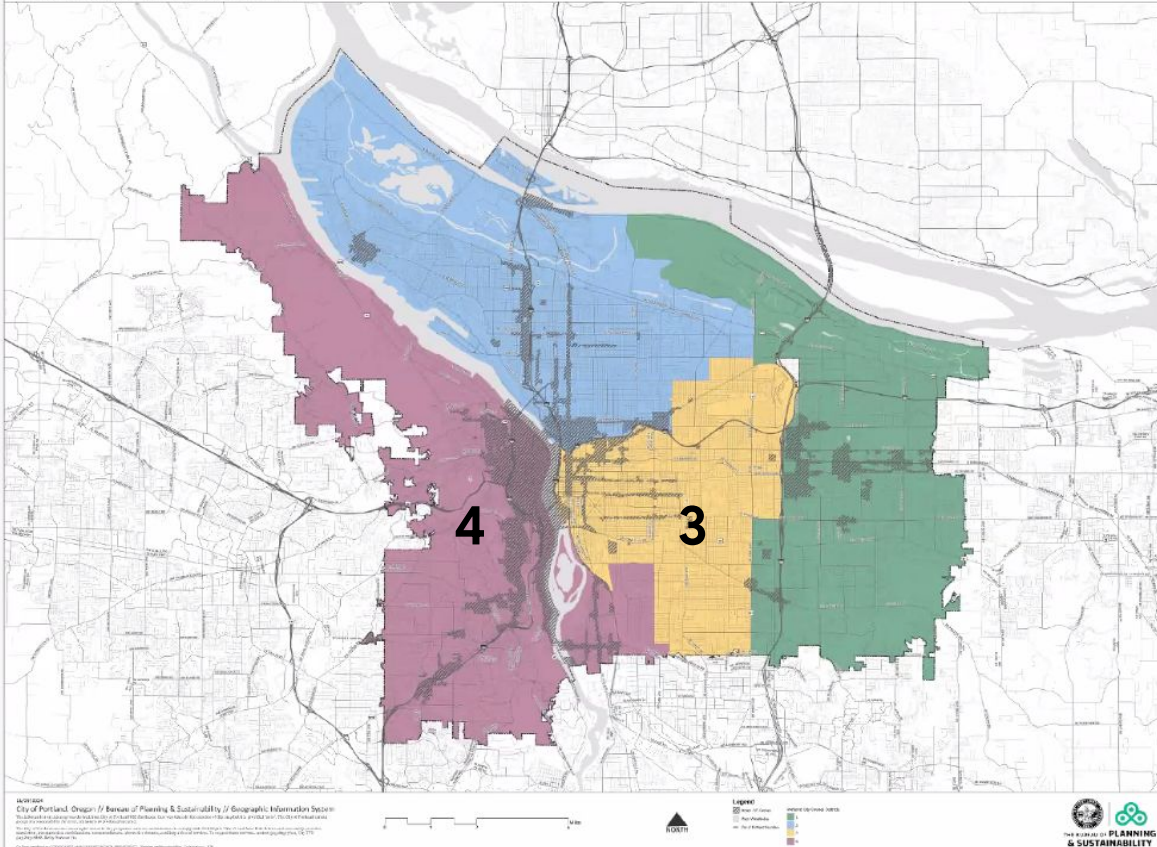
District 2
Rose Quarter Albina 1

Issues resolved through design review: Revised window mullion pattern to increase articulation on facade. Increased amount of solar panels by allowing all eco roof area to be substituted by large planted plaza on ground level.

State of the City 2024

Projects that have gone through Design Review in your District

City Council Districts, Design Overlay



District 3
New Burnside Bridge

Issues addressed through design briefing: Importance of how bridge lands on either side of the river as that is where pedestrians will first experience the bridge. Creating a safe, vibrant and welcoming “place” under the bridge.



District 4
Alderway Building

Issues resolved through design review: Integrated security measures, more emphasis placed on aligning new storefront with existing pilasters to strengthen coherence.

State of the City 2024

Voluntary DAR Julia West

The Julia West House is a 12-story Mass Timber building with 90 units of permanent supportive housing. The project team unlocked a Type II Staff review by electing to do a Design Advice Request.

The ground floor contributes to the activity on the street and enhances the public realm. It provides seating and weather protection for pedestrians and meets all the guidelines in a beautiful way.



DAR 2023
Start of
Construction
2024

State of the City 2024

People - Volunteer Commissioners (4 year term, 2 term max)



Sarah Vaz
Architect -Term 1



Thomas Eldridge
Developer -Term 1



Tina Bue
Public-at-Large Term 1



Joe Swank
Developer - Term 1



Zari Santner
RACC - Term 2



Chandra Robinson
Architect - Term 2

Vice Chair 2023-2025



Brian McCarter
Landscape Architect - Term 2

Chair 2023-2025

State of the City 2024

People - Volunteer Commissioners

Welcome to 2 new Design

Commissioners:

Sarah Vaz and Thomas Eldridge



Sarah Vaz
Architect -Term 1



Thomas Eldridge
Developer -Term 1

Sarah is a licensed architect in Oregon and a Senior Associate at Holst Architects, where she has positively contributed to dozens of projects in Portland over the course of 9 years. Sarah is committed to the open exchange of ideas and understands that the best outcomes come from the tension of holding opposing views – this is a tension that requires a diversity of backgrounds and opinions. Sarah believes the best approach to navigating diverse backgrounds and viewpoints is holding curiosity while working to identify common goals.

Thomas' experience working in affordable housing development started in his native London, UK and he now works as a Development Manager in Portland for an Affordable Housing Developer focused on the thoughtful planning and development of communities that enrich the quality of life of residents. Thomas is passionate about how the built environment impacts us as humans, and sees serving on the Portland Design Commission as an opportunity to act as an ambassador for every member of the public who interacts with real estate.

State of the City 2024

People - PP+D Staff

Staff that guide and support applicant teams through entitlements include Supervisors and Planners. These city stewards are experts in their fields of planning, architecture and landscape architecture.

The city relies on their institutional knowledge and precise understanding of the code to guide projects to outcomes that maintain the vitality and safety of the city.



Kara Fiorivanti
Design & Historic
Resources Supervisor



Tim Heron
Senior City Planner Primary
Staff for DC



Tanya Paglia
City Planner II



Grace Jeffreys
City Planner II



Ben Nielsen
Senior Planner



Staci Monroe
Senior Planner

State of the City 2024

The numbers

The year in Review:

2 - LUR hearing/reviews heard at Design Commission

All - LUR hearing/reviews in 2024 were Slam Dunks: only 1 hearing necessary for Design Commission approval, using our Design Commission discretionary powers

2 - Design Advice Requests, allowing early conceptual advice and public comment

10 - Design briefings for projects not requiring Design Commission review but asking for Design Commission opinion and recommendations

22 - Type II Staff Level Land Use reviews & 23 - Type I Staff Level Land Use reviews

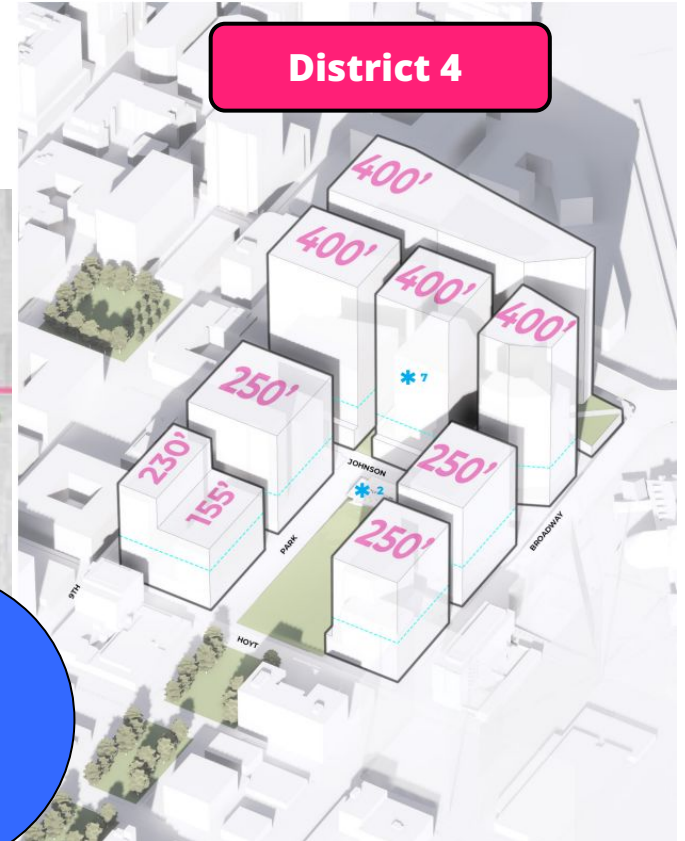
0 - Appeals of Design Commission or Staff Decisions

The Design Commission has also now updated the informal 'Guide to Design Review' for 2025. The quality of street-level residential design will be a focus going forward.

Our interest is in all Portland's design overlay zones.

State of the City 2024

Future of Portland - Broadway Corridor Active Central City Masterplan



State of the City 2024

Future of Portland - Active OMSI District Central City Masterplan

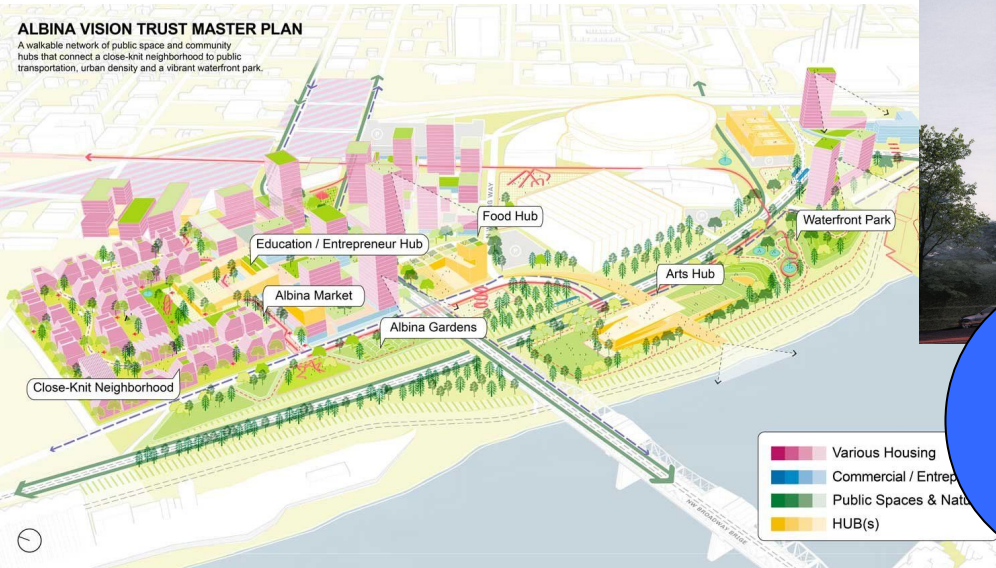


State of the City 2024

Future of Portland - Accepted Community Investment Plan

Albina Vision Trust Community Investment Plan

First project unlocked for development is 94 units of affordable housing and will complete in 2025



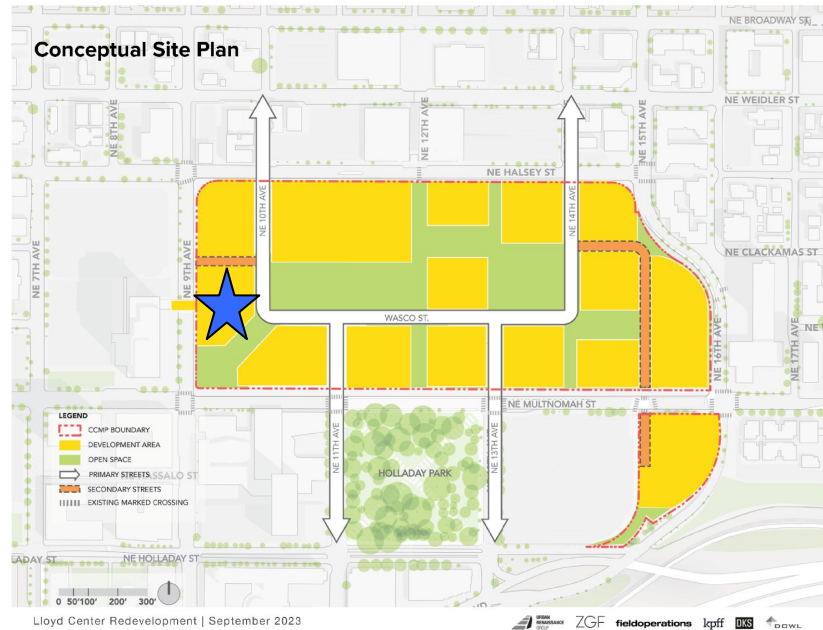
District 2



Land Use
Approved
for 1st
project
2022

State of the City 2024

Future of Portland - *Future Lloyd District Central City Masterplan*



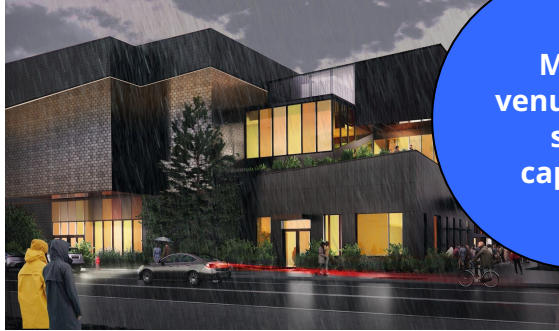
District 2

**Land Use
Approved
2024**

State of the City 2024

Project of the Year – Music Venue in Lloyd District

Though not in the Lloyd District Masterplan area, the design team worked with the plan to make it fit the future context. The DAR was focused on how opaque the building appeared and at the subsequent LUR hearing, the team presented a vibrant project with increased transparency and a high quality glittering brick.



Music
venue 4,250
seat
capacity



State of the City 2023 - 2024

Portland Progress - Exemplary Catalyst Projects

These projects are good examples of how the Design Commission can influence projects in their response to context, public realm and quality and resilience. **These particular projects were improved through changes to the site plan, massing and historic coherence. They are contributing great design to different neighborhoods across the city and act as catalysts for other development.**



Downtown



Civic



Housing

State of the City 2023 - 2024

Portland Progress - Exemplary Catalyst Projects

Interior
work is in
progress!



Downtown

Structure
is starting!



Civic

The
crane is
up!



Housing

Thank you