

# Brian Hoop

**#329857 | June 10, 2021**

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

Dear Mayor Wheeler and members of the City Council: Housing Oregon supports DOZA. Checklist design standards are an innovative way to set basic expectations for new buildings in more of the city, while preserving discretionary review for the projects of true citywide significance. In some parts of the city, it makes sense to encourage architects and builders to color outside the lines of the objective code. In the rest of the city, these objective standards developed over the last four years are a good way to advance thoughtful design while minimizing risk and red tape. Within the discretionary process, we support Amendment 4 as a way to ensure that regulated-affordable housing projects, regardless of their funding source, can be subject to public review and input while reducing the timelines and uncertainty they inherently face. This will help us take full advantage of the zoning incentives for our projects that are built into Portland's multifamily codes. We are concerned about a potential amendment to require DAR or an early assistance conference for projects opting to take the objective standards fast track. While many affordable housing developments do tend to go through early assistance meetings, the fees can be quite high and come at a time in a project where expenses are 100% at risk to the developer. In general, we would ask BDS to continue having the authority to waive fees, and that a policy be put in place to allow DAR/early assistance fees for regulated affordable housing to be waived outright. Ideally, its best for keeping this optional, providing nonprofits the flexibility to decide what's most useful for a project. We oppose Amendment 7, a spot zoning change for Arbor Lodge. Homes, and affordable homes in particular, are clearly scarce in Portland. Storefront commercial and community spaces are nice to have, but the retail market is currently weak and may well remain so. Requiring housing projects to subsidize storefront commercial space will kill housing projects, especially regulated-affordable ones, while putting upward pressure on the cost of market-rate homes. We understand the desire of people living in Arbor Lodge to have more retail businesses within walking distance, but the city council can't make such retail uses profitable by mandate, and vacant storefront spaces are of little use to anyone. The better way to foster strong retail districts is to have a rich mix of homes nearby that offer customers and workers for those businesses. We are working hard to help build such neighborhoods. With this in mind, please do not further expand the M-overlay. Housing Oregon is a membership-based statewide association of affordable housing Community Development Corporations (CDCs) committed to serving and supporting low-income Oregonians across the housing needs spectrum – from homeless to homeowner. We are working towards a day when every Oregonian has a safe and healthy place to call home. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions at 503-475-6056 or

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Testimony is presented without formatting.