



City of Portland Design Commission

Briefing

COMMISSION MEMO

Date: 9/29/23

To: Design Commission

From: Staci Monroe, Design / Historic Review
Staci.monroe@portlandoregon.gov | 503.865.6516

Re: Briefing on Housing Regulatory Relief (HRR) Code Project
Design Commission 10/5/23 hearing

This memo is regarding the upcoming briefing from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) on the **HRR Code Project** on 10/5. The digital copy of the code package can be found at efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/16344107. BPS has also provided a memo to the Commission with an overview of the project.

The intent of this memo is to highlight some code amendments that are relevant to the work of the Design Commission concerning the public realm and process.

Ground Floor Active Use - Provides a 5-year waiver to the ground level active use and the ground level dimensional development standards that apply outside Central City and a 5-year waiver to the prohibition of residential on the ground floor within Central City.

- Ensuring the public realm is safe, vibrant and active is the essence of the hard work staff and the Design Commission do in the City's densest areas, as highlighted in the numerous State of the City Reports to Council over the years. Providing much needed housing **and** supporting efforts to ensure our main streets and core are safe, vibrant and active are **both** critical to the future of our City. There are some streets in Portland's highest density areas that should maintain the Code's current minimal regulations to ensure the health and longevity of existing active uses and maintain the vibrancy Portlanders love about the centers of their neighborhoods and visitors have loved about downtown.

Security Gates and Lighting - Creates a Design Review (DZ) exemption for security gates that are 50% open work and lighting on the ground floor that focuses downward.

- As noted in the Commission's State of the City report to Council this year, security gates with high transparency promote safer and more vibrant sidewalks due to increased light and better surveillance and limits the surface for graffiti. BDS staff recommended to BPS 70% transparency, modeled after Portland City Council's 2021 emergency Ordinance and also New York City's regulations nyc.gov/assets/sbs/downloads/pdf/neighborhoods/storefront-guide.pdf.

Design Review Procedure Types for Housing - Provides a reduced DZ procedure for projects with any housing (Type III = Type II with a Design Advice Request (DAR), and Type II = Type 1x).

- This builds on the current reduced review options for affordable housing projects approved in the Design Overlay Zone Amendments (DOZA) in effect since August 2020. For projects that have taken

advantage of a reduced procedure, the DAR has proven to be an essential step as it 1) allows issues to be identified early and to be problem-solved before large, and sometimes complex projects, are processed through a quicker review procedure and 2) provides early certainty for applicants when they hear from all stakeholders (staff, infrastructure bureaus, public, Commission) so they have the full picture of the issues and what to expect.

Central City Master Plans - Updates and simplifies the process to amend a Central City Master Plan while retaining the appropriate review type (Type III) for major changes like modifying the boundary or removing or modifying an open space or public street.

Please reach out with any questions.