



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Office of the Director
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Paul L. Scarlett, Director
Phone: (503) 823-7308
Fax: (503) 823-7250
TTY: (503) 823-6868
www.portlandoregon.gov/bds

Report to Council

May 8, 2013

TO: Mayor Charlie Hales
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Steve Novick
Commissioner Dan Saltzman

FROM: Paul L. Scarlett, Director
Bureau of Development Services

PLS

SUBJECT: Portland Design Commission State of the City Design Report

The attached report is a required Annual Report of the Portland Design Commission State of the City Design Report for 2013. The report is required by Portland City Code (Title 33) to fulfill the Annual Report requirement for its actions and accomplishments for each fiscal year.

Current Issues and Concern before Council today:

In March 2013, I spoke before the Design Commission in my yearly address to thank them for their service and advocacy on behalf of urban design and architecture for the City of Portland. I also indicated to the Commission that the bureau has experienced an increase in construction activities triggering design review. I shared I was committed to increasing staffing level to better match the workload. The Design Commission is a particularly active volunteer Commission, meeting 23 times in 2012 for Land Use cases and holding 17 required advisory briefing on matters ranging in scale from electric vehicle charging stations to the Portland Milwaukie Light Rail Transit System (much like a 7.1 mile long building).

Both BDS and the Design Commission see the need to be actively engaged in changes to the Portland Comprehensive Plan, Quadrant Plans, and Central City 2035 efforts charged to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Four specific areas are:

- 1. Increase flexibility and design alternatives for the Two-track Design Review process by updating Portland's Community Design Standards (PCC 33.218).** As the economy begins to pick up, these standards need to be revised to keep pace with changing building patterns, infill and materials. The Community Design Standards were first developed in the late 1990's and have been updated little since then. A substantial revision would build in more predictability for development investors while improving the design of the final product for neighborhoods.

2. **Rezoning split-zoned blocks would relieve older neighborhood development tensions.** As the economy improves, new infill development is happening in older neighborhoods. A rezoning effort at these challenging split-zoned blocks would greatly improve neighborhood concerns and promote more compatible development. Alternatively, code amendments could address how to better transition new larger-scale development when adjacent to existing smaller scale neighborhoods.
3. **Expansion of design districts and / or consideration of a threshold that would trigger mandatory design review anywhere in the city.** Many areas of the City see substantial investment along main street corridors, critical intersections, or institutional campuses. Many of these areas could benefit from additional oversight by the Design Commission and / or design standards. The Community Design Standards don't work very well for these larger scale projects because it's really impossible to craft clear and objective standards for these major projects. Design Review is really a more appropriate tool to get good design. As these are ultimately significant investments in the building infrastructure in the City itself for the next 100 years or longer, design oversight at early stages of the process would benefit all parties.
4. **Continued focus on the delicate balance between density, parking and transportation systems.** Support and encourage PBOT and TriMet to take real and considered measures to develop a long-term, sustainable approach to transportation development that makes sense for a city that is growing more dense by the year.

BDS staff are poised and willing to work with stakeholders in recrafting, realigning and expanding our codes, but this can't be accomplished without other Bureau staff involvement, specifically the Mayor's Office and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. I look forward to working with you and the Design Commission in my capacity as the Director of BDS, as we work together to make these needed improvements.

Background:

The Design Commission provides leadership and expertise on urban design and architecture and on maintaining and enhancing Portland's historical and architectural heritage.

The Design Commission consists of seven members, none of whom may hold public elective office. The Commission must include a representative of the Regional Arts and Culture Council, one person representing the public at-large, and five members experienced in either design, engineering, financing, construction or management of buildings, and land development. No more than two members may be appointed from any one of these areas of expertise. The Regional Arts and Culture Council member is nominated by the Regional Arts and Culture Council chair and approved by the Mayor. The other members are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

The Design Commission meets at least once a month and as necessary to act on reviews assigned to them by Title 33. Meetings are conducted in accordance with adopted rules of procedure.

Four members constitute a quorum at a meeting. The election of officers takes place at the first meeting of each calendar year.

The Design Commission may divide its membership into special subcommittees which are authorized to act on behalf of the Commission for an assigned purpose. Three members of the Commission constitute a quorum on such subcommittees. Subcommittee actions require the affirmative vote of at least three members.

Powers and duties:

The Design Commission has all of the powers and duties which are assigned to it by Title 33 or by City Council. The commission powers and duties include:

1. Recommending the establishment, amendment, or removal of a design district to the Planning and Sustainability Commission and City Council;
2. Developing design guidelines for adoption by City Council for all design districts except Historic Districts and Conservation Districts;
3. Reviewing major developments within design districts, except those projects involving or located within the following:
 - a. Historic Districts;
 - b. Conservation Districts;
 - c. Historic Landmarks; and
 - d. Conservation Landmarks.
4. Reviewing other land use requests assigned to the Design Commission; and
5. Providing advice on design matters to the Hearings Officer, Planning and Sustainability Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission, Portland Development Commission, and City Council.

TO THE COUNCIL

The Mayor concurs with the recommendations of the Director of the Bureau of Development Services and



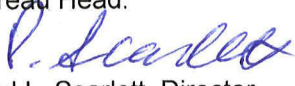
RECOMMENDS:

That the Council accepts this Portland Design Commission State of the City Design Report to Council and report as set for the in Exhibit A.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Hales, Mayor

Agenda No.
REPORT NO.
 Title

Accept the 2013 Portland Design Commission State of the City Design Report (Report)

INTRODUCED BY Commissioner/Auditor: Mayor Charlie Hales	CLERK USE: DATE FILED <u>MAY 03 2013</u>
COMMISSIONER APPROVAL  Mayor—Finance and Administration - Hales Position 1/Utilities - Fritz Position 2/Works - Fish Position 3/Affairs - Saltzman Position 4/Safety - Novick	LaVonne Griffin-Valade Auditor of the City of Portland By:  Deputy
BUREAU APPROVAL Bureau: Development Services Bureau Head:  Paul L. Scarlett, Director Prepared by: Leanne Torgerson Date Prepared: 4/23/13 Financial Impact & Public Involvement Statement Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Council Meeting Date 5/8/13, 2:00 TC City Attorney Approval	ACTION TAKEN: MAY 08 2013 ACCEPTED

AGENDA TIME CERTAIN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Start time: 2:00 p.m. Total amount of time needed: 45 minutes (for presentation, testimony and discussion) CONSENT <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total amount of time needed: 45 minutes (for presentation, testimony and discussion)

FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
		YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz	1. Fritz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. Fish	2. Fish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Saltzman	3. Saltzman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. Novick	4. Novick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Hales	Hales	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	