

DESIGN OVERLAY ZONE ASSESSMENT (DOZA)

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF FINDINGS

September 22, 2016

WALKER | MACY

Angelo Planning Group

Pyatok Associates

Leland Consulting Group

DESIGN OVERLAY ZONE ASSESSMENT (DOZA)

FINAL REPORT OUTLINE

1. Executive Summary

2. Review of Peer Cities

COMPLETED

7/22/16

3. Findings

A. Introduction and Methodology

COMPLETED

B. Over-arching Observations

INTERIM REPORT

C. Specific Findings

INTERIM REPORT

Interviews

COMPLETED

Questionnaire

RESULTS COLLECTED

Site Evaluations

IN PROGRESS

TODAY

4. Recommendations

A. Process

B. Tools

INTRODUCTION

Interim report of findings based on research to date

Emerging themes evident in initial exploration

Recommendations will follow in next phase

METHODOLOGY

Interviews with Stakeholders

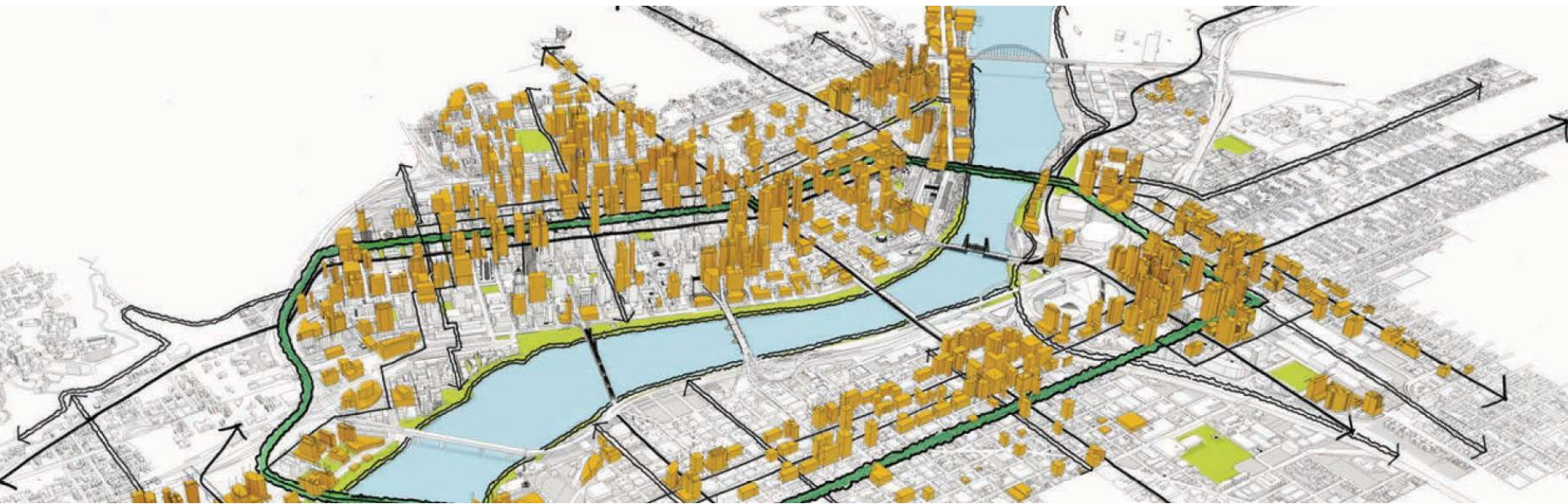
Public Questionnaire

Assessments of Example Projects

OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

1. PORTLAND IS NATIONAL MODEL FOR GOOD URBAN DESIGN

Continued achievement of **creativity, variety, and place-specific results in the built environment** is perhaps being **discouraged by the current procedures and standards of review.**



OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

2. COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THOUGHTFUL DESIGN

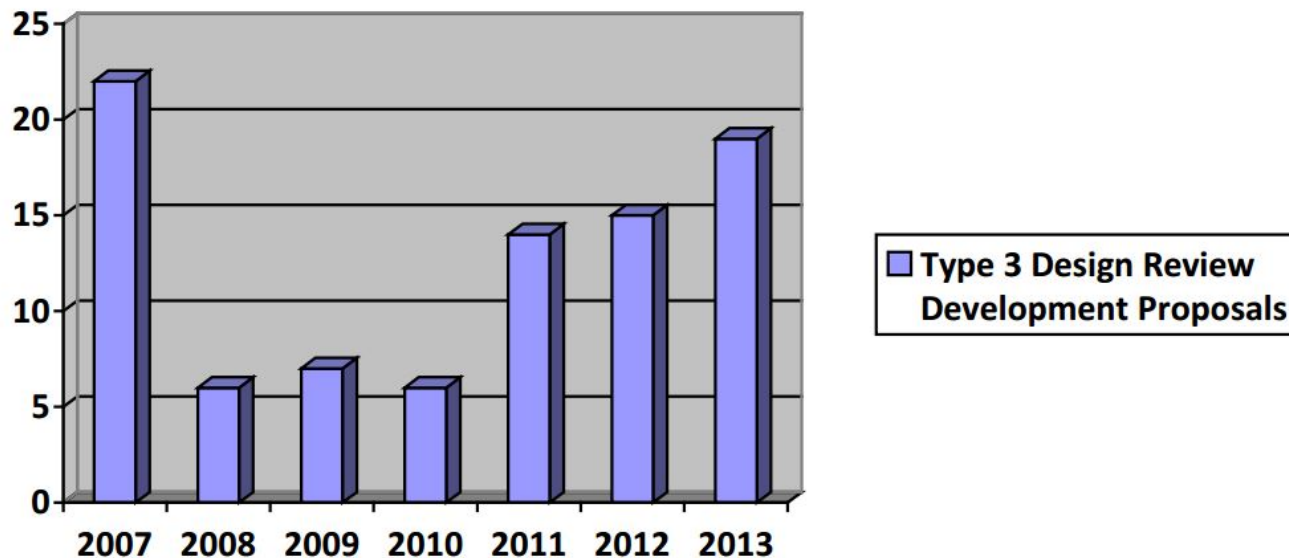
The process of shaping implementation tools, such as the d-overlay, has not been linked closely enough to **community-driven urban design planning**.



OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

3. GOOD INTENTIONS FRUSTRATED BY CURRENT VOLUME

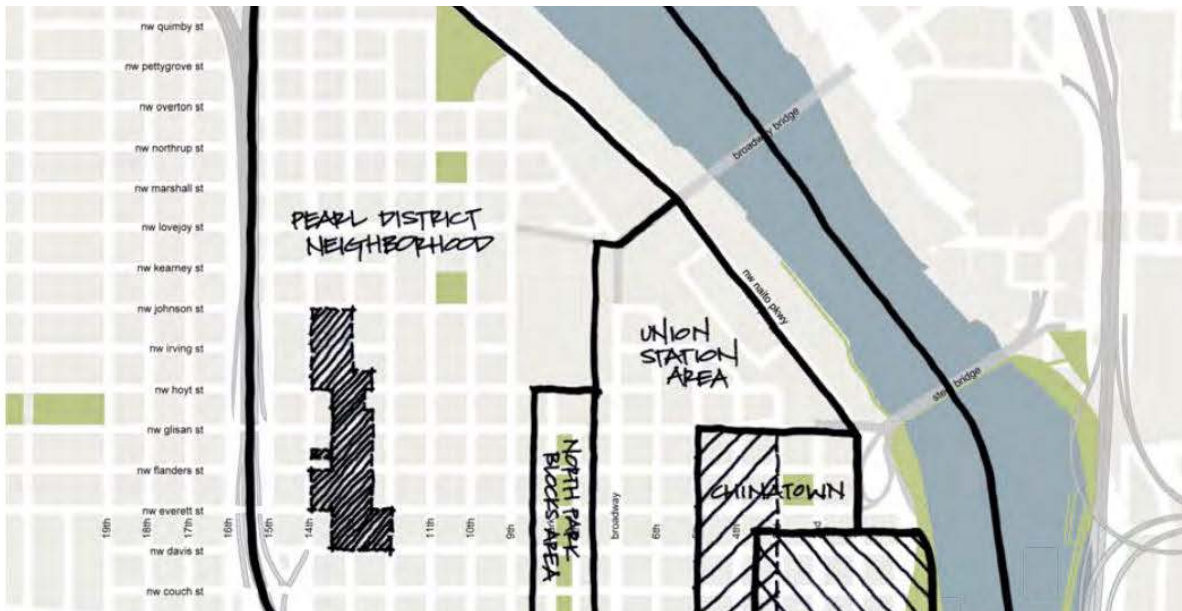
There is a need to consider ways of **reducing the workload**, as well as managing the workload, more effectively.



OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

4. HAVING THE RIGHT TOOLS IS CRITICAL

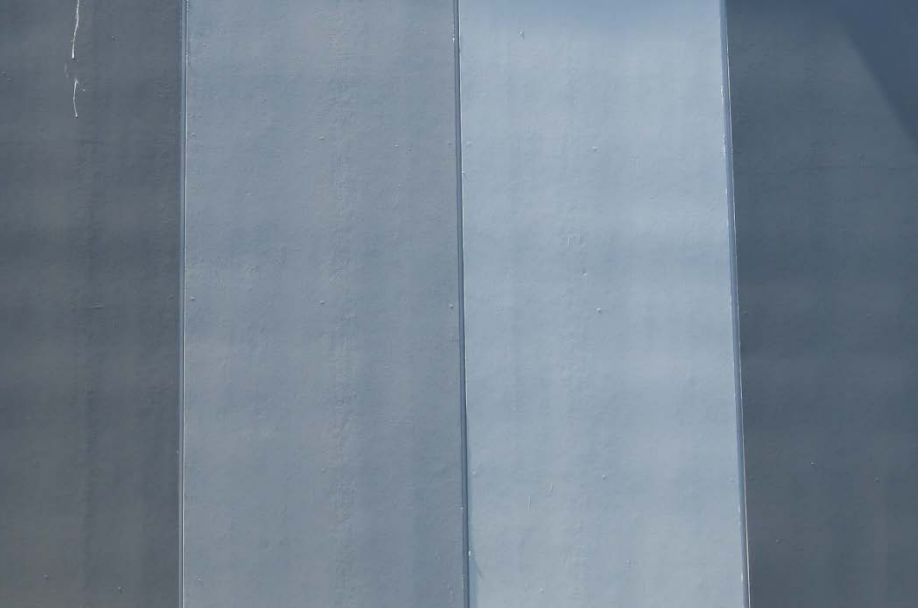
Consolidating and simplifying review criteria, as well as providing a method for contextual application, would be very useful.



OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

5. SHIFT TOWARD DETAILS AND AWAY FROM THE BIG PICTURE

The **amount of detail** discussed regarding building components up front may not be allowing sufficient discussion of **larger issues of context, neighborhood character, massing, and relationship to the street.**



OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

6. PROCESS AND COLLABORATION

For both City staff and Design Commission, instilling a **greater spirit of collaborative problem-solving** than problem-finding would be useful in creating positive outcomes.

It is important to view **applicants as people who are trying to build communities**, giving them due respect in the process.

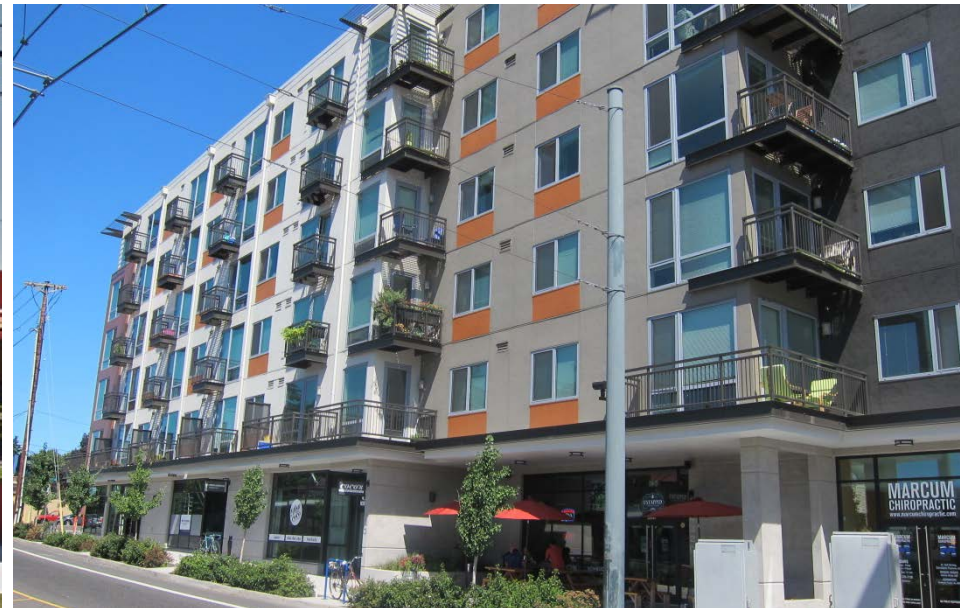


OVER-ARCHING OBSERVATIONS

7. CURRENT SYSTEM DOESN'T REFLECT VARYING IMPACT OF SCALE

Standards and procedures could be structured to make it **easier for the small end of the spectrum to flourish**, even if design results are not ideal.

Thresholds for larger projects, such as those that occupy entire blocks, could be restructured to ensure that such projects **receive greater scrutiny** both through design review and by involving the public in the review process.



MORE SPECIFIC FINDINGS

These findings emerged primarily from interviews; the other two aspects of research will be integrated.

1. PROCESSES

2. REVIEW CRITERIA

3. OTHER ITEMS

1. PROCESSES

A. GENERAL

1. **Public notice** seems inadequate
2. **Dialog** between neighborhoods and development teams **is unstructured**
3. **List of submittals is not always appropriate** to the typical stages of the design process
4. **Design toward “the middle”** in order to gain approval
5. **Lack of coordination** with PBOT and other agencies
6. Lack of **follow-up inspections**

1. PROCESSES

B. NON-DISCRETIONARY PLAN CHECK

1. Community Design Standards don't appear to **reflect individual neighborhoods or districts**
- 2 **Not possible to seek adjustments to CDS** without opening up the entire project up to review

1. PROCESSES

C. DISCRETIONARY DESIGN REVIEW

1. Many design teams have a **preference for working with staff**
- 2 **Staff takes cues from the Design Commission** about details and materials
3. Conflicts with **other agencies**
4. Not clear **who has the final authority** when there are conflicts
- 5 **Basic elements** not determined early enough
- 6 **Staff training program** needs expansion
7. **Administrative interpretations** of guidelines are not available

1. PROCESSES

D. TYPE III (Design Commission with support by City staff)

1. Process adds **significant time and cost**
2. Information requested is **not always appropriate to the design process**
3. Considerable discussion of **details, materials, utilities, and building services**
4. **Number and length** of meetings
5. **Guidelines are not cited during deliberations**; personal preferences seem to dominate some deliberations
6. DAR now occurs **too late**

1. PROCESSES

D. TYPE III (Design Commission with support by City staff)

7. **Management** of Commission meetings is missing
8. Clarify the Council's "**charter**" for the **Design Commission**
9. **Building massing** not necessarily discussed and approved at first meeting
10. "**Unacceptable Materials**" list is limiting
11. Commissioner **attendance** varies—catching up can be disruptive
12. Commission is **overloaded**
 - Second commission
 - Different threshold
 - Focusing the scope

2. REVIEW CRITERIA

A. COMMUNITY DESIGN STANDARDS

1. Standards address parts of buildings but **do not sufficiently address relationship to context**
2. Numerous standards with **repetition and overlap**
- 3 **One-size-fits-all** approach
- 4 Do not recognize the many **diverse parts of Portland**
- 5 **Combination of some standards has produced unintentionally awkward results**, such as off-putting recessed ground floors with little visual interest



2. REVIEW CRITERIA

B. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Central City Fundamentals and Subdistrict Design Guidelines

1. Some discretionary guidelines are **too vague**
2. Do not readily apply to **outlying areas**
3. **Effective in shaping many buildings** within and near the center
4. **Applicable guidelines** not always cited at hearings

2. REVIEW CRITERIA

B. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Community Design Guidelines and Special District Guidelines

- 1. Just placing the d-overlay on an area or corridor would not ensure desirable outcomes.**
- 2. Guidelines are not tailored to specific geographic/cultural areas.**

3. OTHER ITEMS

- **Corridors currently without any design standards or review** are seeing development that is mixed in quality and thoughtfulness
- Many newer buildings in areas without any standards are **coarser in grain and streetscapes.**
- **Wide difference of viewpoints** between some designers and many community residents.
- Issues related to development are often confused with what is **allowed by basic zoning standards.**

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tentatively
11/17/16 and

12/08/16

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Appendices

Report on Peer Cities

Interviews and Major Themes

Citywide Questionnaire

Site Evaluations

70 Broad Brush Evaluations

14 More detailed evaluations

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Thank you for listening!

Comments/Questions?

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