



Northwest District Association
434 NW 6th Ave, Suite 202
Portland, OR 97209

September 4, 2026

Portland Planning Commission
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS)
1810 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 710
Portland, OR 97201

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

RE: Design Review Temporary Suspension Project

Dear Members of the Portland Planning Commission:

The Northwest District Association strongly opposes the proposed suspension of mandatory design review.

We recognize the urgent need to stimulate development in Portland. However, during the Planning Commission's consideration of the Central City Code Amendments held August 25, 2026, a Commissioner stated that developers have identified that financial feasibility, not design review, is the principal obstacle preventing projects from moving forward. Suspending design review does not solve that problem.

If the City has evidence that design review adds burdensome cost, delays and/or uncertainty to make otherwise viable projects financially infeasible, that evidence should be compelling and publicly demonstrated before a fundamental development safeguard is suspended. Nothing presented established that connection.

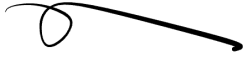
The Commission's own recent Central City process demonstrates its value: more than 50 members of the public provided testimony, and the Commission modified its proposal in response (Portland BPS, July 22, 2026). Public participation did not prevent thoughtful policymaking; it improved it.

Design review exists because the consequences of development extend beyond the property line. Buildings shape streets and neighborhoods for generations. A two year suspension may be temporary. The buildings approved during it will not be.

NWDA urges the Planning Commission to reject the proposed suspension of mandatory design

review and instead address the financial and regulatory barriers that are demonstrably preventing development from moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves slightly upwards at the end.

Todd Zarnitz

Chair, NWDA Planning Committee
Northwest District Association
planning@nwdaportland.org

cc:

Olivia Clark, District 4 City Councilor
Mitch Green, District 4 City Councilor
Eric Zimmerman, District 4 City Councilor

Audit trail

Details

FILE NAME	NWDA PC Letter _ Design Review Suspension - 9/3/26, 5:46 PM
STATUS	Signed
STATUS TIMESTAMP	2026/09/04 00:47:16 UTC

Activity

SENT	todd@advertisingdragon.com sent a signature request to: Todd Zarnitz (todd@nwdaportland.org)	2026/09/04 00:46:14 UTC
SIGNED	Signed by Todd Zarnitz (todd@nwdaportland.org)	2026/09/04 00:47:16 UTC
COMPLETED	This document has been signed by all signers and is complete	2026/09/04 00:47:16 UTC

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