

## **Dela Cruz, Jeff**

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**From:** Torres, Crystal  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2017 8:25 AM  
**To:** PRC  
**Subject:** FW: Design Review Comments 900 N 34th Street, SDCI project #3024100

-----Original Message-----

From: Erik Pihl [mailto:epihl@hotmail.com]  
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 4:30 PM  
To: Torres, Crystal <Crystal.Torres@seattle.gov>  
Subject: Design Review Comments 900 N 34th Street, SDCI project #3024100

RE: Design Review Comments Watershed building 900 N 34th Street, SDCI project #3024100

27 February 2017

Members of the Northeast Design Review Board,

I am a Fremont homeowner and have lived in the neighborhood for 15 years—close (within 5-6 blocks) to the site of the Watershed building. I have served on the Board of the Fremont Neighborhood Council for more than 10 years and serve on the Neighborhood Council's land use and transportation committee. I am writing this letter as a personal endorsement of the project.

While several Fremont Neighborhood Council Board members attended the Early Design Guidance for this project, this evening's Northeast Design Review meeting falls on the same night as the Neighborhood Council's monthly meeting and none of us are able to attend. This should not be perceived as a lack of interest in, or endorsement of, this project.

Similarly, timing of the Neighborhood Council's January and February meetings and a very full agenda in January did not provide an opportunity for the Neighborhood Council to provide a formal Board endorsement in time for this evening's meeting.

I support the Watershed building because as Living Building Pilot Program project, it is consistent with the values of our neighborhood and the Neighborhood Council's objectives to ensure quality of life for Fremont residents. I understand that during EDG, while the Board supported the project, concern was expressed about the design's "fit" within Fremont. Environmental sustainability has long been a priority of the Neighborhood dating back to Honorary Fremont Mayor Armen Stepanian's leadership in establishing Fremont Recycling Center No. 1 in 1973. Fremont's early efforts with curbside recycling were taken over by the City in the late 1980's. Something we view today as an expectation (curbside recycling), was unknown in Seattle in 1973.

Today, our neighborhood's continued commitment to environmental sustainability led the Fremont Neighborhood Council to take a strong position of support for Stone 34 and most recently the Watershed building as they exemplify the type of thoughtful, forward-thinking development, we would like to see throughout our neighborhood and across the city and region.

The developers, Center Of the Universe LLC, are to be commended for their decision to invest in the Fremont neighborhood by committing to a project that embraces the Living Building Pilot Program. While a less expensive

building could be built or the building envelope could be substantially expanded, as allowed by code, COU has chosen to be good neighbors and to construct a building that is sensitive to the Fremont neighborhood and the building's immediate neighbors.

Weber Thompson has done an excellent job of developing a design that embodies COU's commitment to the neighborhood. While I could comment on many positive attributes of the design, I focus my remarks to two. First the landscaping and its innovative approach to gathering and treating storm water from not only the proposed building but also Aurora Avenue, not only mitigates impacts from the building itself, but solves a long standing problem where runoff from Aurora flows directly into Lake Union and the Ship Canal--unfiltered and untreated. The innovative landscape is not only a pleasant visual improvement to the existing conditions, it serves a functional purpose and addresses an existing environmental problem. Secondly, I commend members of the Weber Thompson team (and COU LLC) for their thoughtful and active engagement of the community. The team has met with members of the Fremont Neighborhood Council and presented the project at two public Neighborhood Council meetings to gather community input, advice and concerns. They also met with members of the condo building directly to the north of the project and asked for their input. Concerns which have all been addressed in the plan (design of the north façade—fenestration and planting; alley access both during and after construction; including onsite vehicle parking where none is required by code).

During my service on the Fremont Neighborhood Council board, we have rarely encountered a developer and design team that has been as committed as this team has been to "getting it right".

I support the four requested departures (FAR, structure height, loading berth requirement, transparency at the street) as they are more than adequately mitigated by the overall design, LBPP, and restraint in the building's envelope in order to complement its siting.

Watershed will be a great addition to the Fremont neighborhood. Buildings of this quality combined with sincere and meaningful community engagement should be encouraged as the standard against which all other new construction in the city is judged.

Sincerely,

Erik G. Pihl

Sent from my iPad