

## Todd Stamm

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**From:** Ron Niemi <ron@woodardbayworks.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2015 7:11 AM  
**To:** Todd Stamm  
**Cc:** 'Joe Rehberger'; Mel Armstrong  
**Subject:** Medela Group LLC Testimony to OPC 8-3-15  
**Attachments:** Medela to OPC - Comments 8-3-2015.pdf

Good morning Todd,

Please enter the attachment into the record as testimony in last evening's proceedings.

Thank you,



**Ron Niemi** | President | [Woodard Bay Works Inc.](#)  
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**Medela Group LLC Testimony to  
Olympia Planning Commission  
Monday, August 3, 2015 at 6:30pm**

9th Avenue SE – Proposed Reclassification

Good evening.

My name is Ron Niemi. I represent Medela Group, LLC, the owner of approximately 9 acres of underutilized property accessed primarily through 9th Avenue SE. The Medela property is currently built out at approximately one unit per acre density, with nine aging homes, two of them vacant due to deteriorated condition.

As part of its 2014 Comprehensive Plan amendments, the City Council designated this property as falling within the City's Urban Corridor designation. The purpose of urban corridors is to create vibrant, walkable, and transit oriented areas of sufficient density to support local businesses and neighborhoods.

By way of background; in 2012, this Commission voted to recommend the upgrade of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to a neighborhood collector as part of the joint planning process between the City and the County. Just last year, when this recommendation went before the City Council, the City Council also voted in favor of upgrading 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to a neighborhood collector. Ultimately, the County declined to make any amendments regarding this then Urban Growth Area island property, preferring the City address the property and access issues following annexation.

In 2014, the City annexed the property. This matter now comes back before the City.

- First, the roadways in this newly annexed portion of the City are unimproved, and are more typical of rural county roadways than City streets. An upgrade of 9th Avenue would benefit not only the Medela property, but the entire neighborhood, which already complains of poor access, unsafe roadways, and lack of sidewalks. The upgrade when built out would include a parking lane, two travel lanes, curbs, and sidewalks.
- Second, upgrade of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue is necessary to allow the neighborhood (including the Medela property) to be developed and put to use consistent with its comprehensive plan designation and the City's newly adopted Future Land Use Map. The recommended upgrade is only one-block long and connects a highly developable property within the urban corridor to Boulevard Road, a City arterial.
- Third, as outlined in the staff report, the upgrade of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue is necessary regardless of the zoning change, as the property could not be developed to typical economically feasible densities under the current zoning,

absent an upgrade in classification. Unless the property is to remain rural property, upgrade of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is necessary.

- Fourth, neighborhood collectors are typical City streets common throughout the City's residential neighborhoods to connect them to the rest of the City.

- Fifth, since the planning commission last recommended approval of this upgrade, the City Council has **#1**, annexed the property into the city, and **#2**, designated properties served by 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE as urban corridor land use, and an area where the City would like to see growth and density to support the City's long range planning goals around these corridors and neighborhood centers. An upgrade of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue is the logical extension of the City's planning efforts and a necessary step to bring the property and neighborhood into compliance with the City's Future Land Use Map and comprehensive plan strategies.

- Finally, as you know, Medela has proposed to rezone a portion of the neighborhood to be served by this roadway, which property is really only feasibly developable if proper and appropriate access can be provided – as proposed here.

Medela respectfully requests the Planning Commission recommend the City Council approve the reclassification of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to a neighborhood collector street.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.