

September 24, 2014

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Dear Councilmember [name]:

The Visit Seattle Customer Advisory Board (CAB), which advises Visit Seattle and the Washington State Convention Center on how Seattle can take advantage of its destination potential, met in Seattle on September 16-18, 2014, and was addressed by representatives of the R.C. Hedreen Company regarding development of its Ninth & Stewart hotel project.

This letter is to express growing concern about an economic development opportunity that the City of Seattle cannot afford to miss. **Moving forward with the Ninth & Stewart project preferred "Plan A" proposal for a 1,600-plus room hotel is the *best option*, in our opinion.**

The CAB is comprised of 25 professional meeting planners who book and hold meetings across the U.S. and around the world. Collectively, we hold potential to deliver more than 200,000 hotel room nights of future bookings and more than \$325 million in future economic impact to the City of Seattle. Our attendees shop in downtown stores, dine in restaurants, attend cultural performances, use transportation services and spend money at many other local businesses while they're in town. Meetings also contribute significantly to the Seattle/King County tax base.

Seattle is a highly desirable destination for meeting attendees. However, the city struggles to meet hotel and convention market demand. Since 2008, 332 conventions representing nearly \$1.6 billion in business were turned away for future years due to date availability alone.

As the Washington State Convention Center continues to explore much needed expansion, it will be vital for Seattle to develop a nearby convention headquarters hotel of the capacity proposed by the R.C. Hedreen Co. in order to support increased meeting business.

These two projects make sense on their own merits, and in tandem could be a powerful economic engine that significantly grows the city's share of the lucrative but competitive national convention and corporate meeting markets.

As meeting planners, each of us is responsible for the success of our organization's annual meetings and other events, and for the favorable experiences of our meeting attendees. **We *implore* you to approve the preferred Plan A for the Ninth & Stewart project.** Plan A will help move Seattle forward!

Best regards,

2014 Visit Seattle Customer Advisory Board  
(Members listed on reverse)

## Visit Seattle Customer Advisory Board

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