



**October 10, 2024**

Christopher Hartland  
Department of Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, Concourse  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

**Re: Civic Design Review for 8301 Torresdale Ave (Application # ZP-2024-006378)**

Dear Christopher,

Pursuant to Section 14-304(5) of the Philadelphia Zoning Code, the Civic Design Review (CDR) Committee of the City Planning Commission completed the required review of a proposed warehouse at 8301 Torresdale Avenue.

This letter is a summary of the Civic Design Review Committee's advisory recommendations. It is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

The proposal is for a 191,870 square foot warehouse with 30 loading spaces, 2 drive-in ramps, 44 trailer parking spaces, 150 car parking spaces (including 8 EV spots and 12 ADA parking spaces), and 20 bicycle parking spaces. The parcel is zoned I-2, Medium Industrial and is a by-right project.

At its meeting of October 1, 2024, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: (Upper Holmesburg Neighborhood Association)**

Stanley Cywinski, the representative for the Upper Holmesburg Neighborhood Association attended the CDR meeting and shared the following:

- Properties that are being combined were observed to be blighted and in need of redevelopment. Cleaning up the combined parcels is a positive for the community.
- Removing automotive businesses from site was considered favorable by the community.
- The community has concerns with truck traffic, especially along Torresdale Avenue.
- RCO requests confirmation that there will be no truck traffic on Windgate Street.

**CDR Committee Comments**

The Committee noted that there is room for improvement regarding biodiversity and sustainability. The following specific comments and recommendations were made:

- Consider native plantings, meadow plantings, and pavement reduction
- Lawns can be replaced with more ecologically responsible plantings
- Consider adding a green roof or solar panels.

**Civic Design Review  
Committee**  
*Established 2012*

Martine Decamp, AICP  
*Interim Executive Director*

Daniel K. Garofalo  
*Civic Design Review  
Interim Chair*

Leonidas Addimando  
Sarah Astheimer, ASLA, PLA  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED-AP  
Clarissa Redding, RA  
Carol Scott

One Parkway Building  
1515 Arch St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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The Committee also endorsed staff comments, including:

- Add sidewalks and bike racks along the entry at Windgate Street to improve pedestrian conditions and connections to bus routes.
- Add seating adjacent to the warehouse to provide workers access to outdoor space.
- Consider adding more windows to the corner of the building adjacent to Torresdale Avenue to provide a more welcoming greeting and allow for additional natural light into the structure.
- Increase lighting in the parking lots to improve pedestrian safety.
- Consider expanding planting beds to reduce hardscaping and replace lawn areas with native shrubs and perennial plantings that will enrich the biodiversity and stormwater capacities on-site.

In conclusion, the Civic Design Review process has been completed for this project. Please contact me if you have any questions about the Committee's action.

Sincerely,

Martine Decamp, AICP  
Interim Executive Director

cc: Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, [dkgarofalo@gmail.com](mailto:dkgarofalo@gmail.com)  
Councilmember Michael Driscoll, Council District 6, [mike.driscoll@phila.gov](mailto:mike.driscoll@phila.gov)  
Stanley Cywinski, Representative to Council District 6, [stan.s.cywinski@phila.gov](mailto:stan.s.cywinski@phila.gov)  
Steven Kopp, Norr Architects, [steven.kopp@norr.com](mailto:steven.kopp@norr.com)  
Darwin Beauvais, Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLC, [darwin.beauvais@obermayer.com](mailto:darwin.beauvais@obermayer.com)  
Stanley Cywinski, Upper Holmesburg Civic Association, [scywin@rcn.com](mailto:scywin@rcn.com)  
Michael Gall, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [michael.gall@phila.gov](mailto:michael.gall@phila.gov)  
Christopher Hartland, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, [christopher.hartland@phila.gov](mailto:christopher.hartland@phila.gov)  
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, [michelle.brisbon@phila.gov](mailto:michelle.brisbon@phila.gov)  
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, [kisha.duckett@phila.gov](mailto:kisha.duckett@phila.gov)  
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, [jeanien.wilson@phila.gov](mailto:jeanien.wilson@phila.gov)  
Ben She, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems, [benjamin.she@phila.gov](mailto:benjamin.she@phila.gov)  
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, [jdougherty@septa.org](mailto:jdougherty@septa.org)  
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [paula.brumbelow@phila.gov](mailto:paula.brumbelow@phila.gov)

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 1601 Washington Ave (Application # ZP-2024-005030)**

Dear Christopher,

Pursuant to Section 14-304(5) of the Philadelphia Zoning Code, the Civic Design Review (CDR) Committee of the City Planning Commission completed the required review of a proposed industrial building at 1601 Washington Avenue.

This letter is a summary of the Civic Design Review Committee's advisory recommendations. It is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

The project proposes a 7-story, 200 foot tall industrial building, set on two (2) parcels, totaling 350,991 gross square feet, including: 229,366 square feet of urban agriculture space; 63,171 square feet of office space; 13,200 square feet of building supplies retail space; 183 underground parking spaces; and 36 bicycle parking spaces. The project also includes four (4) courtyard spaces, including three (3) on the second floor, and one (1) on the ground floor. The two (2) parcels that make up the site are both zoned I-2 Medium Industrial, and the project is by-right.

At its meeting of August 6, 2024, the Civic Design Review Committee voted for the project to return for a second review. The applicant team returned to Civic Design Review on October 1, 2024, with no changes to the design. At its meeting of October 1, 2024, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: (South of South Neighborhood Association; North of Washington Avenue Coalition)**

There were two co-coordinating RCOs assigned for this project: the South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA); and the North of Washington Avenue Coalition (NOWAC). Representatives for both RCOs attended both the first and second reviews and participated as voting members of the Committee. Both RCO representatives also submitted written comments prior to the meeting that were shared in advance with members of the Civic Design Review Committee.

The SOSNA representative expressed agreement with the concerns brought up by members of the public, reiterating concerns about the excessive height of the building and the location of the loading zones off Carpenter and 16th Streets. The SOSNA representative noted that the RCO does not oppose the proposed urban agriculture use for the site (given the anticipated job creation) if it were to be done in a sustainable manner.

The NOWAC representative also expressed agreement with the concerns brought up by members of the public. The NOWAC representative expressed additional concerns, including

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concerns about the impact on parking; concerns about the lack of green space; and concerns that the design does not reflect the proposed industrial use for urban agriculture, and instead looks like an apartment building.

### **CDR Committee Comments**

The Committee encouraged improved engagement with the community, given the many concerns expressed about the project, both verbally and in writing. (For both reviews, prior to the public comment period, PCPC staff read summaries of written public comment into the record, including: 30 written comments for the first review; and 18 for the second review).

The Committee determined that, since the applicant team did not submit any changes to the design based on feedback from the first review, the comments from the first review still apply, including staff comments, as follows:

### **Site Design**

- Concerns about excessive number of curb cuts and ground floor space dedicated to loading.
- Increase sidewalk width along Washington Ave to at least 12 feet.
- Expand bike room to accommodate bike parking currently located in lobby.
- Add exterior bike racks for visitors.
- Consider adding raised bike lane on Washington Ave (existing bike lane is not protected).
- Consider enlarging the lobby and relocating the ground-floor courtyard to be between ground-floor artist studios.
- Consider relation of 2nd story courtyards to ground-floor courtyard and maximizing connectivity between these potential shared spaces.

### **Building Design**

- The current building design is a missed opportunity to highlight what could be an innovative landmark project (for the propose urban agriculture use),
- Consider maximizing transparency and greenery, including at ground level.
- Consider larger landscape buffer bordering rear yards of Chadwick St rowhomes. Consider extending the 60-foot building height to the entirety of west building facade.
- Consider how recessed entryways can be designed more intentionally as small plazas with programming.

### **Parking Design**

- Consider more circular layout to minimize dead end conditions in the underground parking area.

### **Sustainable Design**

- Consider built precedents for urban agriculture that can serve as model for innovations proposed.

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In conclusion, the Civic Design Review process has been completed for this project. Please contact me if you have any questions about the Committee's action.

Sincerely,

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Interim Executive Director

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cc: Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, [dkgarofalo@gmail.com](mailto:dkgarofalo@gmail.com)  
Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson, Council District 2, [kenyatta.johnson@phila.gov](mailto:kenyatta.johnson@phila.gov)  
Frantz Pierre, Representative to Council District 2, [frantz.pierre@phila.gov](mailto:frantz.pierre@phila.gov)  
Shimshon Zakin, Atrium Design Group LLC, [shimi@atriumdesigngroup.com](mailto:shimi@atriumdesigngroup.com)  
Ori Feibush, OCF Realty, [ori@ocfrealty.com](mailto:ori@ocfrealty.com)  
Sean Whalen, Vintage Law LLC, [sw@vintagelaw.com](mailto:sw@vintagelaw.com)  
Morgan Rodriguez, South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA), [hello@sosnaphilly.org](mailto:hello@sosnaphilly.org)  
Thomas Donatucci, III, Washington Avenue Property Owners Association, [td3@knickerbockerproperties.com](mailto:td3@knickerbockerproperties.com)  
Albert Littlepage, Point Breeze Community Development Coalition, [apage1801@aol.com](mailto:apage1801@aol.com)  
Vashti Bandy, North of Washington Avenue Coalition, [northofwashingtonavecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:northofwashingtonavecoalition@gmail.com)  
Claudia Smith Sherrod, Point Breeze Network Plus, [clsherrod1444@gmail.com](mailto:clsherrod1444@gmail.com)  
Gabriel Pechaceck, Washington Avenue Association of Businesses and Residents, [waaobr@gmail.com](mailto:waaobr@gmail.com)  
Ian Litwin, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [ian.litwin@phila.gov](mailto:ian.litwin@phila.gov)  
Christopher Hartland, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, [christopher.hartland@phila.gov](mailto:christopher.hartland@phila.gov)  
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, [michelle.brisbon@phila.gov](mailto:michelle.brisbon@phila.gov)  
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, [kisha.duckett@phila.gov](mailto:kisha.duckett@phila.gov)  
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, [jeanien.wilson@phila.gov](mailto:jeanien.wilson@phila.gov)  
Ben She, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems, [benjamin.she@phila.gov](mailto:benjamin.she@phila.gov)  
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, [jdougherty@septa.org](mailto:jdougherty@septa.org)  
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [paula.brumbelow@phila.gov](mailto:paula.brumbelow@phila.gov)

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