

# Tateuchi center

King County Parks Levy Task Force  
Tuesday, September 25, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.  
8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> St. Mercer Island

## Public Comment Remarks by Cathi Hatch on behalf of Tateuchi Center

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of an important regional initiative.

My name is Cathi Hatch. As an entrepreneur and community volunteer, I have spent years helping to make our region one of the world's best places to live, work, start a business, and raise a family. As a current or former member of many civic boards, including Pacific Northwest Ballet, PONCHO, United Way of King County, Tateuchi Center, and the YMCA, I know how critical each and every element of what we call "*Quality of Life*" is to our competitive advantage as a region.

Not least among these jewels are our splendid parks.

I have come here today to ask you to include Tateuchi Center in the next Parks Levy. Tateuchi Center, as you may know, is a performing arts center planned for downtown Bellevue. It consists of a 2,000-seat Concert Hall, a 250-seat Cabaret theatre, and various spaces for community and educational programs.

Providing public funds for a performing arts center in the context of a parks levy may seem counterintuitive at first. And if we define parks narrowly as big green spaces with trees and trails, playgrounds, ball fields, and picnic tables, then a performing arts center isn't very park-like. But like the soul of a person, the *essence* of a park is more than a list of its most common features.

Like parks, Tateuchi Center will be a place to **create** community, a space where terrifically diverse neighbors come together to discover the essential human commonality among their surface differences, building the understanding between *people* that is the lifeblood of a civil society.

Like parks, a cultural center is democratizing, rooted in social justice, and devoted to the equality of experience. There is no caste or class that divides the delight of one child from another.

Like parks, we go to concert halls and theatres for recreation, education, and to elevate our spirits. Tateuchi Center will multiply these virtues tenfold on the Eastside.

And like performing arts centers, we go to parks to enjoy performances – concerts and movies at Marymoor, ZooTunes at Woodland Park. There really isn't a bright line that divides one community space from another.

Tateuchi Center will serve all of the residents of King County, but most notably those who live on the Eastside - people who are increasingly cut off from the region's cultural life, which is still centered almost exclusively in Seattle.

It's no secret: there's a long-simmering feeling that as the County's center of gravity moves eastward, the Region's resources continue to be deployed disproportionately on the west side of Lake Washington. The relentless media focus on building yet another sports stadium in SoDo only reinforces this sense of inequity.

Let me be especially clear about this: we believe that all of the current recipients of Parks Levy funding are vital to the quality of life in King County and merit inclusion in the new levy. But we also



believe that Tateuchi Center is a worthy addition to these beneficiaries, and deserving of something close to parity with Woodland Park Zoo, for example. The Eastside needs a cultural heart to equal its natural beauty. Please consider helping us make this timely dream a shimmering reality. I know our voters will approve!

Thank you for your time and attention.