



Laurelhurst Community Club

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May 13, 2024

To: CUCAC members

From: Laurelhurst Community Club

Re: UW -Greystar Student Housing Laurel Village proposed project

Laurelhurst Community Club represents over 5,000 residents and is a founding member of CUCAC which was formed in conjunction with the University of Washington, a City of Seattle Major Institution, and its surrounding neighborhoods that are directly impacted by its operations and growth plans. The goal is to allow the Major Institutions to grow while balancing the livability of these adjacent communities, and the CUCAC Board is one of the steps in the approval process for its new buildings within the approved Master Plan.

In addition, the University of Washington has reached out for feedback from individual entities for feedback about its projects. In the late 1980's the UW built 80, 2- and 3-bedroom townhouses in the triangular land parcel between NE 45th St and Mary Gates Memorial Drive. To raise funds for other undergraduate housing UW sold its land leases to Greystar to develop and operate off campus housing in 4 sites.

LCC has met with Greystar and the UW three times to offer feedback when they asked for guidance on the Laurel Village site, and we responded with interactive meetings. In addition, the UW housing team presented their general plans to the CUCAC in September 2022, and in March 2024. The plans presented for May 14, 2024 have changed considerably in the 60 days since March 12, 2024 and it appears that almost NONE of the previous comments by the CUCAC from 2022 and from March of 2024 are in these last proposed plans.

LCC requests that CUCAC rejects this plan and request that they take another 60 short days to revise this plan to better balance the livability of the neighborhood with this Major Institution which is the goal of the Department of Neighborhoods "Major Institution Review Boards" process. This applies to all universities and hospitals across Seattle. CUCAC is meant to offer feedback and not rubber stamp proposed projects while they are being formed.

In the May 14, 2024 Laurel Village "new" plans, LCC offers the following comments, and also includes a recap of changes from September 2024, March 12, 2024 and now May 14, 2024:

1. The overarching goals of the site layout **are not** what was previously presented, and are not in-line with guidelines to preserve neighborhood livability:

-The massing was requested to the NE 45th St edge. The buildings are now shifted south towards the existing neighborhood detached homes. Greystar claiming more expensive to

build but this is a life changing and permanent impact on neighbors and moving it back towards NE 45th Street should be re-considered.

-The existing “open space” buffer at the SW corner that was promised and built in 1984, but has shrunken by estimated over 65% , especially in the past 60 days’ plans . The “open space for FOUR times the residents has instead been divided into several including a hilly parcel along NE 45th street and an inward courtyard with a much smaller patch in the SW corner which squeezes many more families’ access .

-The tree preservation is admirable but the site coverage with non-permeable surfaces from surface parking for 186 vehicles, numerous pathways and the introduction of a wide new road from Clark Drive onto Mary Gates Memorial Drive NE. Page 4 of the 5-14 -2024 Landscape demonstrates the significance of adding a new large road inside Laurel Village.

- The lighting is NOT all downlights which is the environmentally friendly new goal of lighting to preserve the “Night Sky” for birds and people. The “festive” lights are not in compliance and are not compatible with the adjacent residences.

2. The aesthetics for the site’s buildings do not represent the “inspiration “ that Greystar espoused of the “Center for Urban Horticulture” in its NW style with its simple natural layers.

What we see in the May 14th buildings on Slide 16 is a very cluttered looking group of three main buildings attempting to “look interesting” but completely fails. CUCAC and LCC goals articulated,

Buildings Design -The current buildings while humble, have a NW vernacular and feel like home for families. Using non-reflective materials (mostly fine here), uncluttered architecture and buildings designed with uncluttered architectural features that are more context sensitive transition to existing residential zones and along Mary Gates Memorial Drive”.

Building Massing and Footprints – “Taller buildings should be sited along NE 45th Street, with lower scale buildings adjacent to residential zones and along Mary Gates Memorial Drive. The fronts of the units should face the street to match existing ones. Garbage and recycling bins should be hidden away from views from Mary Gates Memorial Drive”.

Retention of greenspace- “The current lawn and mature trees along Mary Gates Memorial Drive NE and mature trees provide the needed buffer to adjacent private residences and provides a safe recreational space for the residents especially families, of Laurel Village and a park like entrance to the Gateway to Laurelhurst. Retaining existing mature trees and open space is needed for livability as well for the child-care users.”

Vehicle traffic- “Vehicular traffic resulting from FOUR times the 186 residents with cars on this site including the 120 day care children for faculty and staff daycare (est 95 will arrive from elsewhere) will create significant impacts” “LCC suggests that an exit off NE 45th street could be added for an entrance/exit.

Parking “ Parking will have everyday impact on existing neighbors” who ALREADY have students and staff parking on small neighborhood streets while at UW. CUH also dumps spillovers from events as well as during UW Major Events. While institutions and urbanists wish cars would evaporate, they will exist with families at this site and with decreased parking per unit of .6 and fees charged, the UW has not solved the parking demands needed at the site.

LCC respectfully requests that CUCAC reject this plan so the architects can re-design the site layout, buildings materials, windows and reduce surface and road design to utilize an exit on NE 45th Street and eliminate a street onto Mary Gates Memorial Drive.

Thanks you!

Colleen McAleer

Laurelhurst Community Club and CUCAC member