



Student Society
of UBC Vancouver

Submission to the UBC Board of Governors regarding the Stadium Road Neighbourhood Plan September 1st, 2018

Dear Board of Governors,

This submission is being made on behalf of the Alma Mater Society in regards to the Stadium Road Neighbourhood Plan. The AMS would like to express our support for the neighbourhood and our desire for the neighbourhood to have increased housing, in particular for University affiliated community members.

The AMS is proposing that the current plan of 1.5 million square feet of residential development is expanded to 1.8 million square feet. This increase would expand the current 600,000 square feet of market rental to 900,000 square feet. The faculty and staff restricted rental would expand from 450,000 square feet to 600,000 square feet, and the additional market rental would expand from 150,000 square feet to 300,000 square feet. The AMS also proposes that all additional market rental is entirely restricted to university-affiliated housing (students, faculty, and staff only). See the appendix for more information.

We stand in solidarity with faculty who feel that the commitment made to build ownership options for faculty has not been addressed in recent developments, including the current Stadium Road Neighbourhood Plan. If a financially sustainable and affordable ownership model is possible for faculty we are requesting that at least 200,000 square feet of the 900,000 square feet of the land lease housing will be restricted for faculty ownership. We understand that there is currently an issue that arises with the taxable benefit under the proposed model of faculty ownership in the UBC Housing Action Plan. This, however, does not exclude the university from researching a financially sustainable and affordable ownership model for faculty.

The AMS is also supportive of an increase of building height from 22 stories to 36 stories for the neighbourhoods. It is a conscious choice to build less housing when we limit our building height in the neighborhoods to 22 stories. Most arguments against the tower height increase come down to three arguments: the perception of tall public land lease towers next to smaller wood frame faculty and staff rental units is poor symbolism, tall towers will be an eyesore on campus, and there would be too many people living in one space. The first two arguments come from a point of privilege that students, 14 percent of whom report experiencing housing insecurity while at UBC¹, have little sympathy for. The latter argument is avoided through a proper planning process that takes into account the limitations of the current space and is also disproven by many neighbourhoods that have far more density than is being proposed here. With the current Vancouver housing crisis, students have been forced to reexamine our housing options while attending UBC. Weak arguments against increasing tower height should not prevent more housing development on campus.

We understand that our proposal, and even the current university proposal, may worry community members from an ecological perspective. This is why the AMS has been clear through our representation on the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) that we must enhance the ecology of the current space. We must also maximize the amount of park space in the neighbourhood and that is why we are satisfied that the latest proposals shared with the PAC have at least 12,000 square metres of park space. Ensuring that any neighbourhood can help UBC

¹ AMS Academic Experience Survey Report 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/051-19-2018-AMS-AES-Report.pdf>



reduce its carbon footprint must be a priority. Also, any neighbourhood must respect the Botanical Gardens and other ecological neighbours.

We also continue to hope that UBC will follow a process of meaningful consultation, especially when so many stakeholders are impacted. We were disappointed that the first round of consultation was held during second term exams. We look forward to seeing the results of the second round of consultation for the neighbourhood starting this fall and the opportunity for students to engage during a less busy time period.

We also understand that the land this neighbourhood will occupy is on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the hə́nqəmíñəm speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. We hope the university is engaging in meaningful and in-depth conversations with the Musqueam.

We recognize that students are just one stakeholder in this process and we respect that our opinions on increased housing development are not shared by all. Our hope is not to divide the university community on such an important issue, but rather we hope that with thorough consultation and engagement we will be able to realize a plan that is for the betterment of the entire university community, including for our future generations of university communities.

We respect the opinions held by all stakeholders but the AMS believes it would be short-sighted to adopt any plan that lowers the proposed 1.5 million square feet of residential development. We also believe that any plan that doesn't seek an increase of the tower height from 22 stories to 36 stories would be to the detriment of the local ecological system by increasing the development footprint. We will continue to work in good faith with our partners that represent other stakeholders with the hope we can agree on a plan moving forward.

We hope the Board of Governors will take this opportunity to address the need for more faculty and staff housing, the lack of affordable housing, and the current Vancouver housing crisis. UBC has a unique opportunity with this development and it should not be squandered. The AMS will continue to stay engaged in the planning process and we look forward to these conversations continuing. We thank the Board of Governors for their continuous work on university issues and for your consideration of this submission.

Sincerely,

Max Holmes

Vice President Academic & University Affairs
AMS Student Society of UBC Vancouver
vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca

Cristina Initchi

Vice President External Affairs
AMS Student Society of UBC Vancouver
vpexternal@ams.ubc.ca



Appendix: Comparison of Housing for the Stadium Road Neighbourhood

