



## Laurelhurst Community Club

*Serving Seattle's Laurelhurst Community since 1921*

### October 3, 2022 Design Review Comments

Laurelhurst Community Club comments on Design Review #3039209-EG (Burgermaster/Safeway site)  
We are a community of 5500 residents whose boundary is located 100 yards from the border of the proposed development site, and our neighborhood shares the 5 way intersection with project #3039209-EG. *No outreach was conducted with our neighborhood by any contact, email or written notice*, but on behalf of our impacted neighbors, we offer these Design Review comments:

**1. Project # 3039209 -EG requires a change in zoning, and is requesting departures for an additional 10 feet in height on a very condensed site that both changes the zoning, and displaces two essential businesses.**

**Context & Site** design guidelines state "Prefer that buildings are sited to preserve and incorporate existing mature trees, and configure open space to accommodate large canopy trees". Thus, the design guideline is that exceptional trees should be not removed at all, but rather incorporated in the design to comply with Design Guidelines. The proposed demolition of all other site trees at a minimum requires that the applicant retain at least one mature tree. The City of Seattle's tree canopy shrunk by 3% in these past 3 years mostly due to highly density projects that clearcut this type of development site. To insure that to achieve Seattle's goal of a 30% canopy is achieved in 15 years, all healthy mature trees should be saved outright to shade and clean the air, especially in newly built residential areas.

Retaining only **ONE existing exceptional tree actually on the site to shade its new 780 residents** is not a good reason for the Design Review committee to grant a 10 foot height departure, regardless of adding some new small trees. The height departure should be denied, and the one tree (or more) can be "designed around" to save it.

**2. Urban Pattern & Form design guidelines require zone and height transitions at edges. Allowing extra height at the edge of the 8 story tower is opposite of the design requirements intent and the 10' departure should be denied as it does NOT comply with SC2 b. which requires, " transitions to zoning edges" instead of more height.** Nearby existing buildings **which complied** with the existing code of 75', 65' or 55' including the apartments (55') and detached home dwellers (30') located behind the commercial strip, will be adversely impacted by an additional 10 feet of height which is more visible from the north, and in the viewline of public view corridors of Mt. Rainier. The extra height departure should be DENIED as it does not meet the transition criteria. Secondly, the massing of the project is too dense as it faces the pedestrian activity and adjacent apartments on the ground level streets. Ironically the applicant wants to align its philosophy with the open space of the Union Bay Natural area (page 37) which is inside Laurelhurst, but its own footprint is the complete opposite with massive walls of solid concrete (page 19), especially along Union Bay Place NE street where the most of the pedestrian traffic occurs. The site also does nothing to blend into the existing low rise street appeal at the 5 corners intersection, and should not be approved without opening it up, and lowering its entrance to ground level in an open and inviting way, rather than massive stepped up buildings away from street level. If its philosophy is to offer open greenspace at the Union Bay Natural area, residents in that area should have been notified for public comment.

**2. PL (Public Life)** It states, "Include open space at grade that physically or visually engages the public realm". **More large commercial space** is needed to be designed in the project which requests a change in zoning from commercial to residential mixed use, and displaces the venerable Burgermaster and Safeway. Both commercial entities have served the adjacent neighborhoods as **"essential services"** which provide access to fresh food access for these new and existing residents, who need to eat real meals, not available in coffee houses. Burgermaster serves 3 hot meals a day since 1952 (including Bill Gates, Jr.), and its business is robust today even without all of the new residential buildings in place. Safeway provides an easy option for essential groceries for renters who can

access it *without a car*. The QFC is far enough away to be a long walk with groceries, and its shelves are already half empty from too much demand (and some supply issues). Thus, the applicant should include larger commercial space in this project that is easily accessed from a ground floor for the "public realm" to provide essential needs. There will also be an Aegis senior facility (already underway) across the street from this project in 2024 for 136 residents and staff, and 240 new units of UW student housing units in 2025 across the other side of the street who will also need a grocery store and full service restaurant that already exists. **It is imperative that access to food be retained in big development plans instead of just building expensive housing units.**

**3. Outreach** -This review outreach process for this project has been flawed, and should be expanded and re-noticed to **include more people**. The report says that 12 people "took the project survey" and 9 people attended one of the public meetings. then , the applicant extrapolates percentages from such a low number of respondents. The 500 foot "radius approach" in this case is insufficient because contains almost no "people". The 500 feet notices , which are 250 feet from the commercial center, were sent to : The Safeway grocery store, the Burgermaster, one apartment building across the street, a sub shop, a vape store, Fedex shop, a small gym, a bank, and to "the geese" on the University of WA play field. Masterfully, the "mailing map" did not include ANY residents in the northeast detached home neighbors in Bryant, nor across the street to Laurelhurst residential neighbors and the business district along NE 45th Street. These existing residents and businesses will be the most impacted by adding over 1,000 people with 684 cars to the congested 5 corners intersection, and will experience the real loss of a grocery store and a full service large restaurant without receiving a real "notice". Most have no knowledge that it is happening and no "big signs" have been placed to inform these impacted neighbors.

On page 5 of the packet, under Public Outreach Summary (oppose), the applicant states that "One correspondent encouraged not building the project", but if you read the comments in the record, **there were many** who opposed the magnitude of this project and objected to the displacement of both the large restaurant (Burgermaster) as well as the large grocery store, so this statement is incorrect. Many "comments" were also posted "anonymously" and one from someone on Capitol Hill-far away from any knowledge of the site. This is an inadequate "outreach" process and should be re-done to **include more impacted people** and the nearby community associations and the businesses in Bryant and Laurelhurst along NE 45th St. Laurelhurst Community Club is a 100+ year old non-profit is within 500 feet of the border of this project and should have been noticed. LCC also submitted written and oral comments at the July 25th Early Guidance Design Review meeting, but LCC was not included in the most recent notification for comment. SDCI should require a broader outreach when the 500 foot radius includes grass fields and large streets as the major part of it that footage to capture meaningful public comment.

Thank you for considering our comments and your attention to making this a better project that complies with the City codes, retains mature trees, better fits with the site context and transitions, and will not displace essential services.

Submitted by Colleen McAleer  
President of Laurelhurst Community Club  
September 29, 2022