

Media Advisory  
For Immediate Release

From: Pacific Spirit Park Society and the Wreck Beach Preservation Society

## **THE BATTLE OVER WRECK BEACH TOWERS MOVES TO FULL GVRD BOARD**

Vancouver, BC - July 28, 2005 - The battle over Wreck Beach Towers moves to the full Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Board.

**What: Full GVRD Board Meeting**  
**When: Friday, July 29, 2005, 11:30 a.m.**  
**Where: 2nd Floor Board Room, 4330 Kingsway, Burnaby**

The GVRD Board is expected to vote on GVRD Staff recommendations regarding Phase Two of the UBC Towers project. Representatives of the Wreck Beach Preservation Society (WBPS), Pacific Spirit Park Society (PSPS), the public and students will be speaking.

The first tower, Phase One, is now being completed. The proposed Phase Two, including three more towers, has not yet received a building permit and is now the issue of the controversy. The issue is expected to receive lively and heated debate.

The WBPS and PSPS release of July 13, as well as other press releases and photos of tower visibility from the beach, may be found at <http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers#background>

Additional new information is in a backgrounder below. Line-of-sight (viewscape) drawings and other background reports and presentations available upon request.

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Background:

## A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



WBPS illustration of the planned rear tower  
(May 2004)



Photo of the rear tower at same location  
(June 2005)

<http://www.wreckbeach.org/images/master33.jpg>

<http://www.wreckbeach.org/images/compcu.jpg> (high resolution colour)

<http://www.wreckbeach.org/images/compcu-b&w.jpg> (high resolution black & white)

*By Judy Williams and James Loewen, WBPS*

- In February 2004, UBC announced a plan for four 20-storey towers to be built on the bluffs above Wreck Beach (<http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers/im000582.jpg>).
- On April 10, 2004, WBPS retained a professional firm to help conduct a visual impact study by raising a blimp to the exact height of the towers closest and farthest from the cliff, at the towers' exact location. Only those two towers were measured because of the expense and the Society's limited budget. The height of the blimp is clearly shown in the top right hand corner of the photo that was later used to illustrate the view of the towers from Wreck Beach (<http://www.wreckbeach.org/images/imag2.jpg>).
- On April 12, 2004, UBC and GVRD administrators and staff were sent a memo by respected facilitator, Raymond Penner, reminding them of the commitment by both groups to preserve the views of Wreck Beach (within Pacific Spirit Regional Park) "and vice versa." This commitment was in the Cliff-Erosion Mitigation Plan which was the result of UBC, GVRD, and the surrounding communities including the WBPS.
- On May 3, 2004, WBPS released an illustration produced by an architectural grad student who took UBC's own plans and measurements and superimposed the closest and farthest towers onto a photograph taken April 10, 2004 ([http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers/towers\\_superimposed\\_4-01-04.pdf](http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers/towers_superimposed_4-01-04.pdf)). WBPS has never made any attempt to disguise the process used to produce this illustration. The illustration is an accurate representation of UBC's original plan of the tower now built (Phase One) and towers yet to be built (Phase Two).
- When UBC disputed the results of the visual impact study, WBPS and GVRD arranged to conduct a second test in which UBC was invited to participate. The day before the second test, UBC denied WBPS and GVRD access to the site and refused to allow the test to proceed.

- On or before May 17, 2004, Dennis Pavlich, VP of External and Legal Affairs for UBC, said that the tower farthest from the cliff edge (the Phase One tower now built) would not be visible from Wreck Beach and UBC would proceed to build the towers despite widespread community opposition and no public hearing (<http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers/wbps0517.htm>).
- On November 22, 2004, UBC announced plans to drop the height of the Phase One tower. UBC was forced to lower that rear tower to 18 storeys when it was discovered that their original plan did not comply with the Official Community Plan for Electoral Area A, a bylaw of the GVRD adopted on July 25, 1997. Electoral Area A includes UBC. (<http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers/wbps1124.htm>).
- Petitions were launched by the WBPS where, to date, 27,000 people have signed calling on UBC to find another way. Visitors from all provinces in Canada except PEI, 45 communities within BC but outside the Lower Mainland, 30 states in the US, and 18 foreign countries in addition to thousands of Lower Mainland residents, have supported preservation of Wreck's magnificent vistas.
- In less than 54 hours this summer, over 3000 persons have signed a petition calling for comprehensive public consultation and supporting the GVRD Staff line-of-sight which would preserve the remaining panorama viewscape from Wreck Beach toward the forested cliff tops. Of those 3000 persons, 500 have been students and 200 have been alumni from UBC.
- On July 6, 2005, Tourism Vancouver issued a letter asking the GVRD to preserve the viewsapes near the tip of Point Grey, at Wreck Beach, and including portions of Pacific Spirit Park. Many international and local guidebooks refer visitors and tourists to Wreck Beach, as do six Tourism Vancouver information centres, describing Wreck as "one of the worlds' great beaches", "very beautiful", "undeveloped (and unspoiled)", and "pristine". (<http://www.wreckbeach.org/towers/tvan0706.jpg>).
- On July 20, 2005, a guest editorial appeared in the Vancouver Sun (Soundoff, page A11), where UBC made a number of claims that are patently false and omitted several facts about the process that the University has followed to date about the UBC towers development. UBC has yet to release any new plan for Phase Two of the towers development nor has UBC ever conducted a "public hearing" on Phase Two. Furthermore, Wreck Beach is not "man-made" as claimed by UBC. A public consultation plan developed by UBC was rejected, with GVRD Directors raising concerns about inadequate public participation and disclosure.

Come to the beach at low tide and see the impact of the tower for yourself. Then imagine more towers of the same height. By doing this you'll be following in the footsteps of the GVRD Directors who visited the beach recently, and you'll be one step ahead of UBC's spokesmen Dennis Pavlich and Brian Sullivan.

The GVRD has recommended that no more towers be visible from Wreck Beach, and has required that UBC develop and consider alternatives to preserve the beach viewsapes.

*Judy Williams is chair, and James Loewen is vice-chair, of the Wreck Beach Preservation Society.*