FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 3, 2005

PROTECT WRECK BEACH AND PACIFIC SPIRIT REGIONAL PARK FROM UNBRIDLED, INSENSITIVE UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

The public are invited to view plans for Phase Two of the UBC Marine Towers with UBC and GVRD on October 5, 2005, from 4-7pm, Student Union Building, Rooms 207/209 - 6138 Student Union Boulevard, UBC Campus. The public will then have a chance to present alternative ideas and their opinions from 7- 9pm via an open mike. Letters expressing your concerns will be accepted through October 30, 2005.

Come learn how UBC morphed the 2000 Nairne Report's recommended four, 5-storey and two, 7-storey buildings for that site into four, 20-storey towers before public pressure reduced them to the present configuration.

If people want to speak on the evening of October 5, due to limited time budgeted for speakers, they should take the precaution of pre-registering to speak by calling 604-822-1586 by noon that day.

The Wreck Beach Preservation Society has two concerns with UBC's public consultation process.

First, the notice of the proposed Open House and Town Hall Hearing (in the Vancouver Sun and The Province on, Oct. 1 and Sept. 30, respectively) refers to the development without mention of its impact on adjacent Wreck Beach and Pacific Spirit Regional Park.

"This is totally unacceptable," Chair of the WBPS, Judy Williams said "because it obfuscates the entire public consultation process. We do not know who will be hearing, recording and reporting on public feedback, or what chance the public will have to comment on UBC's interpretation of public input, before the plan is finalized."

Second, we are extremely skeptical about UBC's willingness to actually incorporate public feedback and input into its design. Just one day after the public hearing on October 5th, UBC plans to send its current proposal for Phase Two to its Advisory Urban Design Panel (AUDP) for approval, despite our understanding that the public will have until the end of October to provide feedback.

This should concern all people who value Wreck Beach and Pacific Spirit Regional Park, unspoiled by the visual impact of high-rises!

The GVRD passed resolutions, which state, that if UBC wishes to build more high-rise towers visible from Wreck Beach, UBC must first prove to the GVRD that they have explored all possible alternate locations, and alternate building designs. UBC must show evidence that to not build in this manner would cause UBC "undue hardships." UBC must show they have conducted a "verifiable" visibility-from-the beach study acceptable to both UBC and GVRD staff. This has yet to happen!

The controversial first tower is now visible in the summer at low tide and will be even more visible during the off -season months of the year, when many people who do not use the clothing optional beach in summer come to enjoy the spectacular scenery. This travesty must not be compounded by additional towers.

Contacts:

Wreck Beach Preservation Society

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