

Correspondence with the UNA on Campus Vision 2050

December 8, 2022

The University Neighbourhood Association (UNA) posed a number of questions to Campus + Community Planning through a presentation they shared with UNA members and the UBC Board of Governors Advisory Committee on Campus Vision 2050 and Rapid Transit. [Read Campus + Community Planning's response.](#)

The document referenced in this update can be found below.



December 8, 2022

Richard Watson
Chair, Board of Directors
University Neighbourhoods Association
202 – 5923 Berton Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6S 0B3

Subject: Campus Vision 2050

I am writing to follow up on the recent meetings of the UNA-UBC Liaison Committee and UBC Board of Governors Campus Vision and Rapid Transit Advisory Committee held on November 8th, 2022 and November 16th, 2022 respectively. We very much appreciated the UNA's participation and feedback.

As was discussed at the meetings, there is strong alignment between the interests being conveyed by the UNA and the Campus Vision 2050 guiding principles and 'big ideas', particularly with regard to affordability, climate action, ecology and livability. This is not a coincidence. The guiding principles and 'big ideas' have been developed based on what has been heard from the campus communities and Musqueam, and input from campus experts including SALA and SCARP faculty and the Campus Biodiversity Initiative: Research and Demonstration (CBIRD) interdisciplinary hub.

At the same time, UBC confirmed the need for the campus to continue to grow in response to the acute housing crisis facing our community and to meet the needs of the university. The key is to plan for that growth in a way that lowers carbon emissions, supports local ecology and biodiversity, and delivers associated amenities, services and infrastructure. It is also important to acknowledge that this growth will happen over the coming decades with more specific plans developed for different areas, all undertaken with extensive community engagement.

UBC shares the UNA's interest in bold campus climate action. The university's institutional Climate Action Plan targets an 85% reduction in campus operations emissions by 2030. We are on track for an over 60% reduction this year while accommodating significant academic growth over the last decade. The same intention is guiding UBC's update to the campus Neighbourhood Climate Action Plan. This work is underway and will include engagement with the UNA and campus residents, starting in early 2023.

The updated Neighbourhood Climate Action Plan will build upon UBC's existing commitments, including: the Residential Environmental Assessment Program, which exceeds provincial energy step code requirements, a conversion of the existing district energy system to a low carbon energy source, and an expanded scope to focus on existing buildings, low carbon construction, and climate adaptation.

Public engagement feedback and learnings from our ongoing work with Musqueam on both Campus Vision 2050 and several campus landscape projects is consistent with the UNA's interests around ecology and greenspace. The Campus Vision 2050 guiding principles and UBC's climate action commitments, policies and plans set us up to grow the campus while achieving simultaneous improvements to ecological and human health and wellbeing. Building on UBC's most recent approaches to greenspace, open space and stormwater management, as well as an updated baseline of the tree inventory, a number of new ecology and greenspace indicators are being developed over the coming year to guide Campus Vision 2050 implementation. This work



is being supported by ecology experts with experience working with Musqueam and knowledge of the Point Grey peninsula.

UBC also shares UNA's interest in ensuring affordable housing on campus for individuals and families. The need for more affordable housing is by far the most dominant theme from public engagement and for many it is the most pressing issue for Campus Vision 2050 to address. Pausing the Campus Vision 2050 process at this point would delay our ability to fully respond to this acute crisis. Integrated with the Campus Vision process is the 10-year review of the Housing Action Plan. A number of policy directions are emerging through the review that align with the UNA's interests, including:

- increasing UBC's current target for future rental housing from beyond the current 30 per cent of new homes, resulting in more faculty-staff below-market rental housing and market rental housing for those who work or study on campus;
- exploring opportunities for UBC affiliated housing within the region such as UBC's future presence in Surrey;
- exploring innovative on-campus home ownership programs for faculty and staff (e.g., BC Housing partnership); and expanding current faculty home ownership programs to enable off- and on-campus ownership; and
- designing units and the broader neighbourhoods to reflect the unique needs of the community and innovations related to sustainability, accessibility and livability.

The UNA has also expressed concern about the approach to accommodating neighbourhood development growth up to 20 per cent above UBC's current Land Use Plan. The approach is still being shaped and evaluated through technical work and testing. The emerging direction is a mix of mid-rise and taller buildings prioritizing affordability, lowering our carbon footprint and a ground-oriented neighbourhood feel—all features I know are important to the UNA. It is expected that the prevailing mid-rise base will be complemented with selective use of towers to maximize open space, natural systems and to preserve limited campus land.

We look forward to continuing to engage deeply with the UNA as the process moves ahead. The UNA plays a crucial role in the Campus Vision 2050 process, helping us to understand and appreciate the views of many residents. In addition to reaching individual residents through our extensive public engagement process, we will continue to engage with the UNA Board to understand and reflect the needs and interests of the residential community. More specifically, I would be happy to join an upcoming UNA Board meeting to debrief more fully from the recent meetings.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael White'.

Michael White, Associate Vice President
Campus and Community Planning
email: michael.white@ubc.ca | www.planning.ubc.ca

cc: Nancy McKenzie, Chair, UBC Board of Governors
Anthonia Ogundele, Member, UBC Board of Governors
Miranda Lam, Member, UBC Board of Governors
Karen Hakkarainen, Secretary to the Board of Governors, UBC
Robin Ciceri, Vice-President, External Relations, UBC
Sundance Topham, Chief Administrative Officer, UNA