

Roosevelt Neighborhood Association  
July 8, 2015

To: Mayor Ed Murray

CC: Jean Godden, Councilmember  
Kathy Nyland, Acting Director, Department of Neighborhoods  
Karen Ko, NE District Coordinator  
Ryan Moore, Department of Planning and Development

Re: RNA support for Sisley property (1322 NE 65<sup>th</sup> St.) conversion to public park

The Roosevelt Neighborhood Association (RNA) strongly supports the adoption of a public park on the parcel at 1322 NE 65<sup>th</sup> St., adjacent to 14<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, south of Roosevelt High School, in conjunction with the proposal to seize this property from Hugh and Martha Sisley as partial payment for the civil charges arising from housing code violations in this neighborhood.

The RNA has strongly advocated for redevelopment of the Sisley properties and attention to the many code violations that have plagued the neighborhood for many decades. Conversion of one of these properties to a public park will be greatly valued as an important amenity, especially given the increasing density, and more importantly satisfying a long-time desire of the community to retain a strong connection to the high school, both visually and physically. Developing a park in this location satisfies many neighborhood requests, in addition to providing some benefit for the many years of having to endure these blighted properties in major pedestrian areas.

There has been overwhelming support from community members at RNA Membership and Land Use Committee meetings in 2015 (March 24<sup>th</sup>, April 14<sup>th</sup>, May 12<sup>th</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup>) when this topic was discussed. At two of these meetings representatives from CityBuilders presented alternative proposals, and while the desire for affordable housing resonated strongly in the community, support for public open space on the site was the desired outcome.

In conjunction with the Green Street designation for NE 66<sup>th</sup> St. and the increased setbacks along 14<sup>th</sup> Ave NE provided for in the 2011 Rezone process, the public park is the most fitting resolution for this property.

#### Council Support 2011-2012

Sally Bagshaw – “I want to commend the efforts of the Roosevelt neighborhood. At a time when we hear “NIMBY” tossed about so flippantly, these neighbors did exactly what we wanted of them, and what we asked of them. They created a Neighborhood Plan, accepting—even enhancing—growth and density in Roosevelt, not fighting it.”

Tim Burgess – “The protection of view corridors to and from Roosevelt High School is especially important and we achieved that with today's vote. Our final legislation, while allowing some higher height, opens up and protects views from 15th Avenue Northeast and along 14th Avenue Northeast.”

#### History

The Roosevelt community, through the RNA, in 2005 advocated for the Sound Transit station to be located in the central core of the neighborhood, knowing that this will both require, and encourage, more density in conjunction with this alignment. The RNA completed a Neighborhood Plan update in 2006, and concurrently produced a Report of Recommended Zoning to implement this plan. The plan exceeded all density targets provided by the DPD.

In 2011, the Mayor and DPD proposed a plan to adopt all of the neighborhood recommendations in addition to increasing the zoning to 85' in the core blocks and also raised the “high school blocks” to 65'.

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In response the RNA formed a consensus group representing various stakeholders, including from the Ravenna neighborhood (RBCA), to draft a revised plan. This new plan, called Sustainable, Livable Roosevelt (SLRP) accepted the Mayor's proposed 85' heights in the core, extended the core 85' zoning further, and up-zoned an area east of I-5 to MR zoning. Again this plan exceeded all density targets provided by the City.

The one difference remaining between the Mayor/DPD plan was the height limit on the 3 three blocks in front of, south of Roosevelt High School - the only historic landmark in the neighborhood. Roosevelt High School had recently undergone a \$92 million renovation and has the only open space in the core of the neighborhood with views to downtown and Mt. Rainier. The RNA kept the original 40' height in front of, south of the high school and added green streets and view corridors while the Mayor's plan had 65' zoning on the three blocks in front of, south of the high school. Yet *the SLRP had MORE density than the Mayor/DPD plan.*

On September 19, 2011, a public hearing was held in a filled auditorium at Roosevelt High School. All nine City Councilmembers attended and listened to the neighborhood overwhelmingly support the SLRP. Support for the Mayor/DPD plan came mostly from people outside the Neighborhood, many of whom said they supported it because it had more density -- not wholly true, given that the SLRP plan supported more density overall than the Mayor/DPD plan.

In November 2011, after the election, the COBE committee of the City Council voted in favor of the Mayor/DPD plan, rejecting the neighborhood plan.

In Conclusion

In consideration for the Roosevelt Neighborhood's strong advocacy for the location of the Light Rail station, and during the 2011 Rezone process, whereby the RNA, in conjunction with the Ravenna neighborhood, proposed the Sustainable Livable Roosevelt Plan (SLRP) with higher density targets than the Mayor and DPD;

Whereas the City Council adopted these, in addition to increased heights and density on the "high school blocks;"

Whereas the RNA wants to create a streetscape environment that is activated, vibrant, walk-able and pedestrian-friendly, including a pedestrian Green Street along Northeast 66th Street;

Whereas the RNA wants to maintain Roosevelt High School's central impact on the neighborhood by protecting views from the high school to the south and views of the high school from the streets;

We, therefore, call for the City to create additional open green space, at 1322 NE 65<sup>th</sup> St.

Sincerely,



Jack M. Mowreader  
RNA President



Jay Lazerwitz  
RNA Land Use chair