

Laurelhurst Community Club News

published by the Laurelhurst Community Club ... serving the Laurelhurst community since 1920

Dear Neighbor,

LCC has worked intensively for two years to promote an expansion plan for Seattle Children's that allows the hospital to nearly double in size on its Laurelhurst campus while preserving the livability and vitality of the surrounding communities. Children's rejected this approach and asked that the Seattle Hearing Examiner approve much more - a tripling in size, with the hospital's campus officially expanded for the first time to take in property and development across Sand Point Way. All efforts at compromise with Children's failed.

In Seattle, Major Institution Master Plans are reviewed by the Seattle Hearing Examiner - basically the City's "land-use judge" and then by the City Council sitting as appeal judges. This past summer, the Seattle Hearing Examiner ruled that LCC's concerns were valid and that Children's plan was just too much - it went past the tipping point between hospital expansion and neighborhood preservation. What followed was a flurry of appeals to the City Council by Children's and its allies as well as counter-appeals by LCC and other community groups concerned about the precedent that would be set if the Hearing Examiner's well-reasoned decision was overturned.

Many neighbors have expressed their appreciation and support for LCC's work. Others are not sure what the expansion really involves or what impacts it would have on them or our neighborhood. There also have been, in the months since the appeals were filed, many public relations salvos from our friends at the hospital (and, we really do consider them friends and neighbors despite all that has occurred and the unkind words they sometimes toss our way). So, now that some of the dust has settled and the matter is awaiting decision by the City Council, LCC is devoting this issue of LCC's E-news, to remind all of our basic objectives.

First, some facts: As already mentioned, Children's demand is for a tripling of its size. That would make it the largest pediatric hospital in the country. The average size of the top 10 children's hospitals in the US is 313 beds. Children's plan calls for 600. As the Hearing Examiner observed, this is based on the idea that patients would be required to come to Children's from all over the state rather than have their needs served closer to home.

The question LCC has raised consistently is whether this will work in and for Laurelhurst. As is well known, Laurelhurst is not conveniently served by an Interstate. Neighbors are dependent on Sand Point Way and the notorious Montlake Bridge corridor (rated the most congested in the state). And, there are particular aspects of the Children's plan for our neighborhood that were not constructive: leapfrogging Sand Point Way; replacing an in-scale campus with an institutional blockbuster more in keeping with Seattle's downtown or Pill Hill; an 1,100-car parking garage exit onto a key residential street rather than Sand Point Way.

The Hearing Examiner thought it was all too much for a hospital campus in a residential neighborhood. That left her no choice other than to recommend denial, because Children's refused to allow consideration of anything less. As we have said before, Children's adamantly painted itself into a corner, while we

begged it to leave room for compromise.

LCC continues to seek a compromise even while the City Council considers Children's appeal. And, we still hope that Children's will be willing to meet us halfway.

Meanwhile, the City Council's Planning, Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee is tentatively scheduled to hear its first briefing on Children's proposal at 9 a.m. Nov 18. The committee will not hear any oral arguments at this meeting. Council procedures in this matter are governed by quasi-judicial rules, which specifically prohibit communication with council members.

Sincerely,

LCC Board of Trustees: Jeannie Hale, president; Emily Dexter, Stan Sorscher, Marian Joh, Cary Lassen, Colleen McAleer, Brian McMullen, Len Nelson, Don Torrie, Mark Trumbauer, Maggie Weissman, Kirsten Curry Whitcomb, Adrian Whorton, Leslie Wright

What Is LCC's Position Regarding Seattle Children's Major Institution Master Plan for Expansion?

LCC supports an expansion that would allow Children's to virtually double the size of its Laurelhurst campus. Children's proposes to nearly *triple* its size, which is more than three times the amount of development approved by the City in Children's previous master plan.

Children's proposed master plan for expansion is in conflict with the Major Institution Code. This code specifically allows for dense institutional growth within approved specific boundaries, such as designated urban villages, to protect the livability and vitality of adjacent neighborhoods. Seattle's Department of Planning supports overriding these codes, but the Seattle Hearing Examiner denied approval of the proposed Seattle Children's plan due to its impacts on the residential neighborhoods. The plan is now before the City Council.

LCC Supports:

- **Expanding significantly the Major Institution Overlay (MIO) boundary to include 6.75 new acres (Laurelon Terrace condominium site).**
- **Increasing the current maximum MIO height limit from 90' to 105'**
- **Enlarging the current footprint where tall tower heights of 90' and 105' would be allowed**

LCC Seeks Reasonable Changes to Children's Current Proposal:

- **Reduce the expansion from 1.5 million square feet (plus mechanical space) to 750,000 square feet - a size that would better balance the 20-year projected needs of Children's with those of the neighborhood.**
- **Eliminate expansion across Sand Point Way NE (Hartmann Building).**

- **Limit maximum building heights to 105'.**
- **Provide a 75' setback along *all* Children's NE 45th Street frontage.**
- **Eliminate proposed entrance to Children's on 40th Avenue NE.**
- **Place the Southwest Parking Garage underground.**



NE 45th Street

This overview (above) shows both the existing campus and the proposed expansion onto the Laurelton Terrace condominium site and to the Hartmann Building across Sand Point Way NE.



NE 45th Street

This overview (above) shows the bulk of the expansion moving down the hill on to the Laurelton Terrace property. The 1,100-space Southwest Parking garage is on the corner of NE 45th St. and 40th Ave. NE. The Hartmann Building is across Sand Point Way. The tallest buildings (conditioned up to 140' + mechanical) are shown in the darkest color.



Current view of Children's campus from Sand Point Way across from Wells Fargo Bank at 40th Avenue NE looking southeast toward Children's.



Proposed height and bulk of Children's expansion shown from the same vantage point.

These images are from the Children's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, prepared by the City of Seattle, Department of Planning and Development, and the Final Major Institution Master Plan submitted to the City of Seattle by Seattle Children's. Both photos are from Appendix C (Height, Bulk, and Scale Figures-- pages 34 + 37) the City's Draft EIS. The "current view" photo is Viewpoint 8 Alternate 1 (the no-build option). The "proposed height and bulk" is Viewpoint 8, Alternative 7. No representations for Alternative 7r or 8 were made available to LCC.

Thank you for your continuing support in working for a sustainable and reasonable Children's expansion.

No community council relishes a battle with an important City institution. But, unfortunately, the hospital long ago set its team of lawyers and consultants on a give-no-ground approach with a budget to match.

LCC has been able to keep neighborhood concerns in the discussion due to all of you who have contributed to the special appeal to enable LCC to pay its consultants and attorneys.

And, it is your contributions that support our work in the Council where Children's and City departments have allied to attack the City's own Hearing Examiner. We are her voice because the City's Department of Planning and Development, under instructions by Mayor Nickels, has attacked the decision of the City's own Hearing Examiner. LCC's success to date would not have been possible without your financial support.

This is the first time in Seattle's history that a Hearing Examiner has ruled there was no choice but to recommended denial of a Major Institution Master Plan. If the Examiner's reasoned decision is swept away, the message will be clear for every neighborhood counting on the balance of development and neighborhood integrity in Seattle's zoning laws: money talks, institutional pressure wins, the Hearing Examiner is only respected when she rejects neighborhood concerns.

Please make contributions through LCC's secure online payment option at

www.laurelhurstcc.com, or mail your check to LCC at 4616 25th Avenue NE,
PMB #373, Seattle, WA 98105.

Jeannie Hale, president
Laurelhurst Community Club