February 28, 2017

Tony Leavitt, Senior Planner  
City of Kirkland Planning and Building Department  
123 5th Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033-6189

RE: Northwest University Master Plan Comment Response Letter  
ZON16-02063

Tony:

Thank you for coordinating the work of city staff and for the careful review conducted on behalf of the city to insure the successful process of adopting a new twenty year master plan for Northwest University. Northwest University has reviewed both city and public comments and proposes to alter the master plan in accordance with the written responses below and the associated updated drawings and documents attached.

City Staff Comments

- Planning Staff consulted with the Public Works Surface Water Group and we are recommending that the stream be daylighted near the College entrance (located west of 109th Lane downstream from the storm water detention area) and restoration of the stream buffer near the chapel occur. The timing of this can be negotiated but we believe it should occur as part of the first couple of phases. Also the stream will need to be reclassified using the newly adopted standards to ensure compliance with regulations.

Response: Northwest University proposes to incorporate the daylighting of the stream and buffer restoration as recommended by city staff in the locations indicated and during the phases proposed below. Additionally, the stream will be reclassified in accordance with the currently adopted standards with whichever of the following activities occurs first. Initial review of the current standards assumes the stream is a Class B stream, perennial non-fish bearing.
Please see updated plans depicting the location and general character that daylighting the stream in this location may look like.

**Daylight Stream with the Welcome Center- phase 3**
Northwest University proposes to daylight the stream concurrently with the construction of the Welcome Center building. The construction of the Welcome Center as proposed in the master plan is the phase that will require relocating an existing piped portion of the stream uphill from the proposed daylighted stream. NU proposes to combine the work to daylight the stream and relocate the piped portion of the stream during phase 3, which will minimize construction impacts to the stream.

As a condition of approval for the master plan, Northwest University recommends:
- Daylighting of the stream be designed per the standards and requirements in KZC 90.105 Stream Relocation or Modification in a manner similar as if it was a Class C stream and review and approval may be considered by the Planning Official.
- Installation of a split rail fence or equivalent barrier per KZC 90.95 Stream Buffer or Barrier around the portion of the daylighted stream.

**Restore buffer with Field Improvements - phase 5**
Northwest University proposes to restore the existing stream buffer near the chapel be concurrently with the proposed improvements to the athletic fields (new Field Turf and lighting, specifically excluding the fieldhouse). The reason for this is the proposed new Field Turf will require significant updates to the storm water facilities serving the fields. While the new storm water facilities for the athletic fields will be designed to the current storm water code including water quality measures at the time of construction, additional mitigation through the buffer restoration for the increased impervious surfaces generated by the Field Turf is appropriate.

As a condition of approval for the master plan, Northwest University recommends:
- Buffer restoration plan to be submitted and approved by the Planning Official
- The planting plan to be evaluated per KZC 95.50 Installation Standards for Required Plantings
- A monitoring plan per the requirements of KZC 90.55(4) Compensatory Mitigation
Installation of a split rail fence or equivalent barrier per **KZC 90.95 Stream Buffer or Barrier** around the restored buffer.

_Staff is concerned about the overall length of the tennis center as viewed from NE 53rd Street. Even though the project is not subject to design review, utilization of the design techniques in KZC Section 92.30 would help to minimize the bulk and mass of the building. Additionally renderings showing the building with existing and proposed landscaping would be helpful._

Response: **Northwest University proposes the following revisions to the design of the proposed Tennis Center to address comments and concerns by City Staff and Public Comment and to minimize impacts:**

- **Remove Upper Parking garage from the plan.**
  - This will also reduce the height increase request from 50’ ABE to 40’ ABE for the building.
  - This will reduce the proposed parking for the building by 82 stalls (leaving approx. 79 stalls in the lower garage).
  - The traffic study indicates there is an excess of parking on the campus for the entire build-out of the master plan. See pages 41-44 of the Draft Transportation Impact Analysis for a full discussion of campus parking.
  - 79 stalls will also provide sufficient parking for the maximum use of the tennis center.

- **Add additional features to the South façade elevation facing NE 53rd to meet the Design Guidelines as well as agree to Administrative Design Review for the final approval of these features.**
  - Add Balconies/modulation to the façade
  - Add Roofline variations to the façade (at the balconies/modulation)
  - Keep material changes (CMU base, metal siding, eave detail)

- **Increase the buffer for the Tennis Center from the existing minimum of 30’ to 50’ reflecting a 67% increase to the standard buffer in the PLA-1 zone.**

- **Endeavor to retain as many trees in the first 30’ of the Tennis Center buffer while still incorporating a rain garden.**

- **Please see updated plans and renderings of the proposed Tennis Center that reflect the above changes. Additional renderings as requested by the City showing proposed changes are included as well.**

As a condition of approval for the master plan, Northwest University recommends:
The tennis center building permit be subject to Administrative Design Review per KZC 142.25 - Administrative Design Review (A.D.R.) Process and specifically limited to the South Façade.

Design review will be limited to the following
- KZC 92.30(2) Horizontal Definition in All Zones;
- KZC 92.30(3) - Techniques To Moderate Bulk and Mass in the RHBD and TLBD Zones;
- KZC 92.3(4) - Techniques To Achieve Architectural Scale in All Zones;
- KZC 92.3(5) - Techniques To Achieve Architectural Scale in the RHBD and the TLBD Zones.

Conceptual massing diagrams have been added to the Tennis Center drawings and renderings indicating how these techniques may be applied to minimize the bulk and mass of the building. The proposed changes to the Tennis Center Design also are reflected in the updated renderings and drawings.

With regard to the minimum requirements of KZC 92.30.3 - Techniques To Moderate Bulk and Mass in the RHBD and TLBD Zones, Northwest university specifically requests the minimum required modulation depth of 20’ be reduced to 6’ in order to maintain the maximum buffer distance possible from the building to the PLA-1 boundary of 50’, since additive modulation is necessary due to how reductive modulation would impede on the minimum tennis court size required.

Please see updated Tennis Center Renderings and Drawings.

Staff is concerned about the proposed tennis center use specifically that the university does not currently have a tennis team. Are there any plans to add one?

Response: Northwest University will definitely consider adding intercollegiate tennis to its athletic offerings. Furthermore, NU is committed to work towards becoming a top tier university. As indicated in President Castleberry’s narrative ‘Why Tennis’, adding a tennis team is inclusive of this vision. While there are no immediate or definitive plans for an intercollegiate tennis team (there is no tennis facility at present), approval of the master plan with the tennis facility is the necessary first step towards initiating any plan to add tennis to the NU athletics offerings.
• Sheet L1.5 shows the removal of all the trees within the NE 53rd Street buffer adjacent to the proposed tennis center. However on page 29 of the project narrative, it says that some existing trees will remain. Please clarify. Also note that there is a minimum buffer planting standard in Section 45.60.2.d and that 45.60.2.f requires that “new construction of buildings and parking areas shall preserve existing significant trees to the maximum extent possible”.

Response: Within the first 30’ of the Tennis Center buffer, there are currently 18 significant trees shown on the tree plan. The current proposal to include a substantial rain garden with enhanced buffer planting and to berm the grade up to the tennis center building, along with the deep excavation necessary for the building will necessitate removal of all the existing significant trees as indicated on the original tree plans (L1.5 and L1.6). If the buffer area did not include the rain garden, it is likely that up to 17 of the 18 significant trees in the first 30’ of buffer could be protected and maintained – see supplemental Tennis Center Buffer Significant Trees Diagram below.

Northwest University recognizes there is a balance between the benefits of keeping existing mature trees and providing Best Management Practices for the storm water facilities by providing a substantial rain garden and an enhanced buffer with berms and additional grading. With this in mind, Northwest University proposes that the Tennis Center’s enhanced buffer
include a rain garden that is reduced in size and scope along with maintaining as many existing significant trees as possible. The full design for the rain garden and tree retention will best be finalized during the specific site planning and building permit review for the project. Please see updated potential enhanced buffer drawings and tree plans that include a concept where 13 of the 18 existing significant trees are retained within the first 30’ of tennis center buffer, along with a redesigned rain garden. See revised drawings L1.2, L1.5 and L1.6.

- Regarding trees, there is no site plan that shows the tree survey tag numbers reflected in the arborist report. The survey plans show the species and size but not the tag numbers. This is needed for a complete arborist review.

Response: Please see the updated tree plan drawing, L1.5 that includes tree survey tag numbers.

- To help with support of the reduction of the PSAA buffer to 10 feet, staff recommends a letter from PSAA agreeing to this and any conditions that may be associated with that support (i.e. maintenance of the fence).

Response: Northwest University is in talks with PSAA to obtain written agreements to the proposed buffer reductions between the PLA-1 boundary and the PSAA property. It is expected that an agreement will be reached in March, 2017 at the next scheduled PSAA board meeting and a copy of the agreement will be sent to City staff at that time to be included for consideration in the hearing and by the hearing examiner.

- A few more details on the use of the fields would be helpful. Specifically will there be a limit on the number of games occurring at any one time (as mentioned in the traffic report that there could be a lot of games occurring at one time with younger soccer teams) and are there any plans for a field manager or event coordinator to help minimize impacts on neighboring properties. Also it would be helpful to provide a video or graphics that show examples of the proposed lighting. Also in regards to the turf fields, check with the surface water group on the impacts of the new regulations going into effect in 2017.

Response: Northwest University has conducted a survey of use policies and rental agreements utilized by the City of Kirkland Parks, Lake Washington School District and NU’s own agreements for outside groups and have developed an outline to guide use agreements and rental policies
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for the fields and other NU facilities by outside groups. Please see the attached NU Fields and Facilities Use Guidelines.

**Number of Games**

Typical use of the fields will vary based on the age of the participants and time of the year. Typical use will consist of a mix of age groups and number of players that will result in something like six to ten games at a time, though maximum use could be more. For instance, it is conceivable that if U-6/7 soccer games occupied both fields simultaneously, there could be up to 16 games with 6 children for each game (3 on 3) occurring at one time. However, as the ages of the athletes increase, the size needed for playing area increase, reducing the potential maximum number of games occurring at any one time. It is not the intent of the shared field usage that the fields are utilized to the maximum extent possible for the maximum length of time possible. The intent in structuring the shared field use policy is to provide adequate flexibility for the varying needs of the community – all subject to the primary needs of Northwest University’s use of the fields. The traffic study addresses the conceivable potential maximum use of the fields, while in practicality the use will in all likelihood be less. Northwest University requests that the current maximum number of games discussed in the traffic study not be reduced so that the use of the fields may have the most flexibility to meet the potential needs of the community.

Northwest University proposes field use restrictions to minimize impacts to neighboring properties such as the limit of shared use to a maximum of eight hours per day in lieu of carte blanche maximum hours per day.

Northwest University intends to have a field manager if shared use of the fields as proposed is approved and adopted. It seems reasonable that the field manager’s responsibilities will include coordinating use of the fields to minimize impacts to neighboring properties (for instance directing use of the South field for activities when both fields are not needed).

**Field lighting**

Additional diagrams for the field lighting have been produced to help explain why Northwest University is requesting the height of the lighting. The taller the light standards, the less glare and spill-over lighting to neighboring properties. The proposed height of the field lighting is intended to minimize impacts to neighboring properties, along with only
lighting the Southern field. Please see updated drawing A1.12 Lighting, which includes the diagram below:

A case study is provided by the proposed field lighting manufacturer, Musco Lighting, of a private university installing LED field lighting as is proposed for the NU fields (see link below). The current technology of LED field lighting reduces glare and spill over light and minimizes the impacts to immediate neighbors. Additionally, in response to previous comments NU heard from the community, the field lighting was reduced from both fields to only the southern field again to minimize impacts to neighboring properties.

Case Study

Local Examples of Musco LED Field Lighting

- Are there plans to increase pedestrian connectivity on campus? Specifically from the married student housing to lower campus thru the athletic fields or near the Barton Building.

Response: Yes. Included with the athletic field improvements, the existing gravel pedestrian path from the married student housing is proposed to be enhanced with new concrete sidewalk and stairs. Additionally, a new pedestrian stair is proposed connecting the Ness parking area to the athletic fields, which is proposed to be included with the athletic field improvements as well.
Summary of Public Comments to Address

- Size, scale and use of the tennis building

Response: The design for the tennis building is proposed to be revised as discussed in the comment response above to minimize impacts to neighboring properties along NE 53rd. In summary, these revisions include reducing the height of the proposed building by 10’ to 40’ ABE, increasing the minimum buffer from 30’ to 50’ representing a 67% increase over current minimums and endeavoring to retain as many of the existing mature trees in the first 30’ of the tennis center as possible.

Additionally, Northwest University has heard the concern regarding commercial use in the PLA-1 zone expressed through some of the public comment. There is a strong precedent for commercial use of property within the PLA-1 zone. Specifically, when the Seattle Seahawks occupied and operated a commercial professional football team on campus property. This use was approved and operated successfully for over two decades from 1986 to 2008. Likewise, a Play Facility such as a commercial tennis center is allowed through a IIB zoning permit (KZC 45.20.070), which is the process through which the new master plan will be adopted. KZC 05.140, defines Play Facilities to be "A commercial recreational facility, including swimming pools, tennis courts, play facilities and/or other similar uses." (Emphasis added). Both in precedent and in definition, a commercial tennis center may be approved through the master plan process.

On a similar note, much of the concern of the Tennis Center has been around the idea that the Tennis Center is intended to be a new source of critical funding for the university. This is simply not the case. While the business plan for the tennis center is that it will cover its own operational costs, it is not intended nor planned to be a new critical funding source for the rest of the institution. Northwest High Performance Tennis is gifting this building and use of the building to Northwest University in a similar manner that the Seattle Seahawks gifted the Barton Building and existing field improvements to the University and operated under a shared use agreement while the Seahawks operated out of the Barton facility.

Further, Northwest University intends the Tennis Center to be a community asset. The facility will be open to all, including immediate neighbors and members of the Houghton neighborhood. Currently,
Northwest High Performance Tennis users consist of around 25-30 percent Kirkland residents when assessing all programs, leagues and facility use. When it comes to the programs offered through NWHPT Kirkland residents make up around 40-45 percent of the users. This is intended to be a community facility and amenity. In addition to the tennis facilities and training offered, the building is planned to include a new indoor walking and running track. The proposed running and walking track amenity will provide 330 yards/lap of warm, dry and safe indoor exercise space that is intended to be free and open to all members of the Houghton community as well as students, faculty, staff and guests of Northwest University. A summary of the draft use agreement between Northwest University and NWHPT is attached and included for reference. Please see Tennis Center Draft MOU Summary

The revised tennis center design minimizes impacts to the neighboring properties and will provide a wonderful public amenity to the community.

- Tree retention in the south buffer

Response: Please see the previous comment response above. In summary, through reducing the size of the proposed rain garden, it may be possible to retain 13 of the existing 18 mature trees in the first 30’ of the tennis center buffer.

- Access to and from NE 53rd Street and potential impacts to neighboring residential uses

Response: A revised traffic study includes discussion and response to this comment in the revised executive summary. Please see the revised traffic study that was submitted concurrent to this response letter.

- Street parking around the exterior of the campus

Response: A revised traffic study includes discussion and response to this comment in the revised executive summary. Please see the revised traffic study that was submitted concurrent to this response letter.

- Renting of the campus facilities to outside groups. Some comments mention noise and security issues. Staff Comment: It might be beneficial to look at how local churches and schools handle renting of the facilities and provide details.
Response: **Northwest University has conducted a survey of use policies and rental agreements utilized by the City of Kirkland Parks, Lake Washington School District and NU’s own agreements for outside groups and have developed an outline to guide use agreements and rental policies for the fields and other NU facilities by outside groups. Please see the attached NU Fields and Facilities Use Guidelines.**

- **Long term maintenance of the north buffer (near the fields)**

Response: **Northwest University is committed to doing better to maintain the north buffer near the fields. Specifically, Northwest University has undertaken a quarterly maintenance inspection of the north buffer area led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. As a condition of the approval, Northwest University proposes that at each quarterly inspection, a summary report is provided to the immediate neighbors and the City of Kirkland to review and request additional maintenance. Additionally, perhaps a performance bond and the standard of care for the maintenance of the north buffer could be explored to further minimize impacts to the north neighbors.**

- **Traffic Impacts Staff Comment: It appears that a lot of these issues are addressed in the Traffic Report but Transpo should review and address in a revised report. Thang is also requesting this.**

Response: **Transpo Group has completed additional traffic studies and has provided a revised report which was submitted concurrent to this response letter.**

Sincerely,

Eric L. Drivdahl, AIA
Principal