



SHORELINE
CITY COUNCIL

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Mayor

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August 27, 2019

David Schumacher, Director
Office of Financial Management
P.O. Box 43113
Olympia, WA 98504-3131

The Honorable Hilary Franz
Commissioner of Public Lands
PO Box 47001
Olympia, WA 98504-7001

Cheryl Strange, Secretary
Department of Social and
Health Services
PO Box 45010
Olympia, WA 98504-5010

Dear Commissioner Franz, Secretary Strange, and Director Schumacher:

On behalf of the City of Shoreline, I am writing to express our concern with the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) proposed plan for the Fircrest Campus as shared at their Stakeholder Meeting on August 19, 2019.

The Fircrest Campus consists of approximately 84 acres of land owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and DSHS. Today the campus is home to the Fircrest Residential Habilitation Center (RHC), that serves some of our community's most vulnerable residents, in addition to approximately 35 acres of undeveloped property not currently programmed for use by the RHC. The City has steadfastly supported the RHC since the City's incorporation and has been supportive of the State's efforts to address the long-term planning for the RHC and for other properties on the campus to support the RHC. Given the significance of the campus within the Shoreline community the City has adopted policy statements within its Comprehensive Plan that speak to our community's vision of the Fircrest Campus including:

- Encourage Master Planning at the Fircrest School that protects its residents and encourages energy and design innovation for sustainable future development.
- Evaluate property along transportation corridors that connects light rail stations and other commercial nodes in the city, including ...Fircrest for multi-family, mixed-use, and non-residential uses.

- Unlock the Fircrest excess property to create living-wage jobs while respecting and complementing its existing function as a facility for people with disabilities.

Over the past decade, DSHS has openly acknowledged the need to consolidate RHC operations and the existence of substantial tracts of land within the campus that had been identified with no planned future use. In fact, disposition of some parts of the Campus have been studied by the agency. Meanwhile, Shoreline residents have enjoyed the presence of de facto open space in the heart of their community.

In recognition of this underutilized land, various levels and departments of State government have articulated visions for the Fircrest Campus. These varied concepts include affordable housing, early childhood education, senior services, commercial development to generate revenue for State Trust beneficiaries, behavioral health facilities, and the commitment of permanent recreation open space.

Earlier this year the State Legislature adopted two capital budget provisos directing State agencies to engage in two efforts:

- *DSHS*: Preliminary design and siting of a new forty-eight bed behavioral health facility with submission of preliminary predesign to the appropriate legislative committees by December 31, 2019.
- *DNR, OFM, DSHS*: Develop recommendations for future use of underutilized portions of the Fircrest School campus, including the southeast and southwest corners. Recommendations must include options for developing affordable housing and public open space on underutilized portions of the Fircrest School campus.

Unfortunately, the plan that DSHS unveiled on August 19 seems to only address the first of the provisos and, as a result, we have strong concerns for the plan as proposed. Based on the conversations at the Stakeholder Meeting, DSHS intends to vacate buildings that are being left in place with no plans to remove them. Other buildings are slated for removal with no plans to place any other structure on their existing site. New facilities, such as the potential behavioral health facility, are located without a necessary assessment of whether that location is the best option at that location.

Fircrest remains the only campus-designated tract of land in the City to never have submitted a comprehensive plan outlining future uses. The City has consistently addressed the need to consider uses that are complimentary to, and not in conflict with the core mission of the RHC. To that end, the City has been supportive of win-win opportunities such as commercial use which could deliver revenues to DNR Trust Land beneficiaries and support living wage jobs, residential housing in a region with an affordable housing crisis and recreation/open space to serve the needs of Fircrest property residents and the growing community surrounding it. The current campus designation and zoning limits what can be approved by the City Council under a Master Development Plan permit. The City Council has previously expressed a willingness to consider taking legislative action to support a solution that might allow new uses or higher density development as long as it is in the best interest of the community. Our preferred approach is to work collaboratively to develop a shared vision for the best use of available land, taking advantage of utilities, topography, and the efficiency of adjacent existing and future uses.

The City wants to be a partner in the State's effort to effectively plan for the uses of the Fircrest Campus for the long-term benefit of the RHC, the region's needs, and the residents of Shoreline. Accordingly, the City of Shoreline asks your agencies to work with the full range of interested parties in an

information-based, transparent partnership. Recognizing that the Legislature has established deadlines for agencies to address the budget provisos we ask that all parties work together in good faith to develop a project timeline to allow a collaborative process to function effectively, even if that means an extension is needed.

The City of Shoreline, its residents, elected officials, and staff, have consistently offered their time and support in service of the State's planning process with regard to Fircrest. We are optimistic that a planning effort that brings all of the agencies together, including the City, can result in a plan that supports the goals, interests and aspirations of the various stakeholders. Site planning analysis, evaluation of alternatives, and community input must be incorporated.

The Fircrest Campus is a uniquely large and valuable asset in an increasingly crowded region, and we should not squander this opportunity to plan for its development the right way. The people of Washington deserve a thoughtful, comprehensive and collaborative process.

We remain hopeful that the State will share our view and build this partnership with us.

Sincerely,



Mayor Will Hall

CC: David Postman, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor



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