

**From:** [Amol Goyal](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Heck, Patrick](#); [Nicholas Garton](#); [campusneighborhoodassociation@lists.wisc.edu](mailto:campusneighborhoodassociation@lists.wisc.edu)  
**Cc:** [Prusak, Sydney](#); [ELIZABETH ROSE ELLICK](#); [Badger Herald](#); [editor@dailycardinal.com](mailto:editor@dailycardinal.com)  
**Subject:** 126 Langdon Steering Committee Report  
**Date:** Thursday, March 4, 2021 5:23:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [126 Langdon Street Steering Committee Report.pdf](#)

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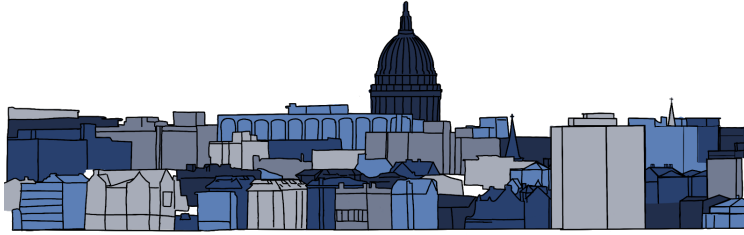
Dear Plan Commissioners, City Staff, and Neighborhood Activists:

I respectfully submit the attached steering committee report for the 126 Langdon Hub II project. Please reach out to me at [agoyal8@wisc.edu](mailto:agoyal8@wisc.edu) or [canamadison@gmail.com](mailto:canamadison@gmail.com) for any follow-up questions or concerns.

### **Executive Summary**

- The massing, size and scale remain excessive without any significant change from the first application.
- There is no provision for affordable housing.
- The site circulation plan still presents problems with only 2 legal loading spaces.
- The history of Core Spaces in Madison and elsewhere generates concerns about truthfulness, community dedication, and reliability.
- Excess height does not fit with the collegiate neighborhood and contributes to unwanted massing.
- There is concern about management of drive without knowing proposed easement agreements.
- The building management plan lacks detail and is incomplete.
- A third-party security service should enforce off-hours management and security during peak times (as defined in the report), not student residents.
- Noise generated by the large number of Greek-life residents with outdoor luxury amenities will be deleterious to the welfare of neighbors.

Best,  
Amol Goyal  
he/him/his  
President, Campus Area Neighborhood Association  
House Fellow, Cole Residence Hall



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CAMPUS AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## **126 Langdon St Steering Committee Report**

March 8, 2021

The Campus Area Neighborhood Association respectfully submits the following report to the City of Madison Plan Commission.

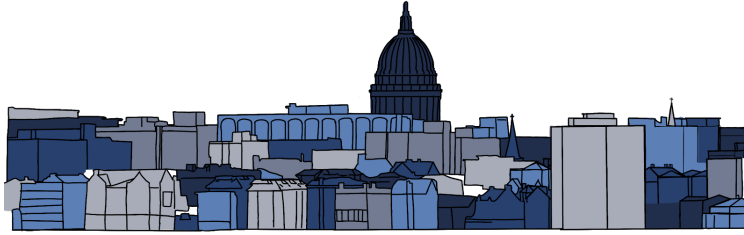
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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide a set of facts, observations, and recommendations to the City Plan Commission regarding the development proposal, Hub II. This project, aiming for a nine-story (considered as seven by City staff) apartment complex, was submitted by Rodney King, from Core Spaces, Jeff Zalisko, from Antunovich Associates, and Brian Munson, from Vandewalle & Associates.

### **Background**



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Core Spaces presented to the Plan Commission on May 19, as well as on July 27, 2020, to develop a nine-story apartment complex for primarily student housing. The steering committee acknowledges that by City Planning, that should be considered as seven stories from the highest point in the ground, but for Neighborhood purposes, the steering committee refers to it as nine. Before both Plan Commission meetings, the Project Design was also brought to the meetings of the Urban Design Commission, at the request of District 2 Ald. Patrick Heck.

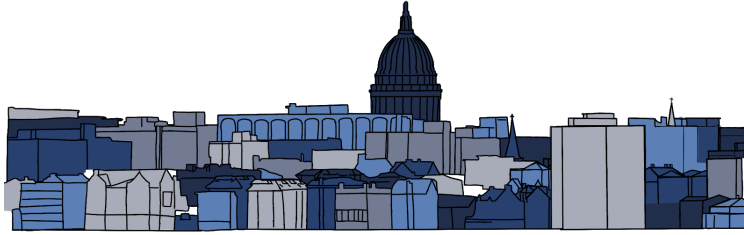
At their second meeting at the Plan Commission, Core Spaces' proposal was placed on file without prejudice. Through this time, the Campus Area Neighborhood Association created a [petition](#) which gathered over two thousand signatures.

On December 16, 2020, Core Spaces proposed a revised project, for which the Campus Area Neighborhood Association (CANA) held a formal steering committee. It acknowledges that a previous steering committee emerged out of the Mansion Hills Neighborhood group from the Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. Neighborhood Association, but since the establishment and operations of CANA, CANA organizes public input for the Plan Commission's review. CANA deeply appreciates the previous work that has been done to both improve and critique the project and hopes to integrate that, as well as a strong student voice, on this project.

To accommodate for more time and review from the public, Core Spaces agreed to move their presentation to the Plan Commission from February 8th to 22nd (although the City moved it further to March 8th). Given the tremendous amount of time dedicated to presenting to the public at large already, in addition to the Plan Commission, CANA appreciates that this time was given to the steering committee for additional fact-finding and review. CANA is thankful for the developers' continued showing up at neighborhood meetings and for their optimism in the project.

### **Neighborhood Association**

CANA is a grassroots, not-for-profit advocacy group that meets regularly to build civic engagement, community solidarity, and neighborhood advocacy for the residents of the UW-Madison campus & related areas. In connection with our locally elected Alders Heck, Verveer, and Prestigiacomio of the City of Madison, CANA is officially recognized as a Neighborhood Association. This means, from time to time, local developers and public safety officials can consult with CANA as an important entity prior to presenting their development or



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proposals to the City. Such a norm allows CANA to serve as a vehicle for its constituents to voice their concerns and questions on the shape, character and future of their neighborhood.

This proposal falls under the boundaries of Ald. Patrick Heck, District 2.

### **Steering Committee Attendance**

The neighborhood meeting included 22 attendees and went for 2.5 hours.

The steering committee's first meeting included 12 attendees and went on for almost 1.5 hours. Here, attendees introduced themselves and included (but were not limited to) the following: Eli Tsarovsky, Bob Klebba, Cleo Le, Fred Mohs, Ayomi Obuseh, James McFadden, Barb Garrity, DeeAnne Slaughnessy, Kurt Stege, Shriya Goyal, Thomas Hickey, Franny Ingebritson, and Benjamin Pierce.

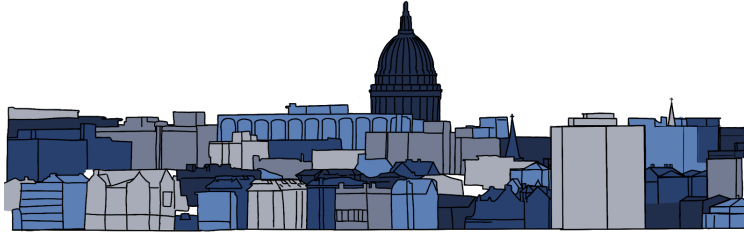
CANA President, Amol Goyal, chaired the steering committee. The steering committee met four times after this; two of these meetings included the developers' engaging with the audience. Each meeting lasted 1 to 1.5 hours and included 7-15 attendees.

### **Group Expectations**

At the very beginning of the first steering committee meeting, Goyal asked attendees to share their expectations of the group for that and following meetings. Members stated the following.

- All concerns of the members of the committee to be taken into concern, even if they can only make one meeting.
- The report considers the positives and the negatives of the application, particularly on issues of mass and scale.
- The report focuses on the standards of the conditional use approval for plan commission's review.
- That attendees try not to avoid conflict or areas of disagreement.

### **Steering Committee Conclusions**



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After all deliberations, the steering committee expressed serious discomfort with the Hub II proposal. The steering committee does not believe Core Spaces is willing or able to manage the property in the long term. In terms of the management itself, the committee believes that the building will not provide the safety and security sufficient for a healthy living experience of the students and other residents of the UW-Madison campus and related areas.

The building will sit on a federally recognized Historic District and will impair the character of the area that has been preserved for decades prior, as listed in the Langdon Street [Character Study](#). The massing, size and scale remain excessive and the changes from the previous proposal are at best, minimal.

The bonus stories do not add quality to the project, other than quantity - and therefore, should not be approved. The developer has not promised that there will be affordable housing units in this project. At best, the Hub II will contain market rate rent prices, which are not sufficient to protect individuals of low-income backgrounds on or off the UW-Madison campus.

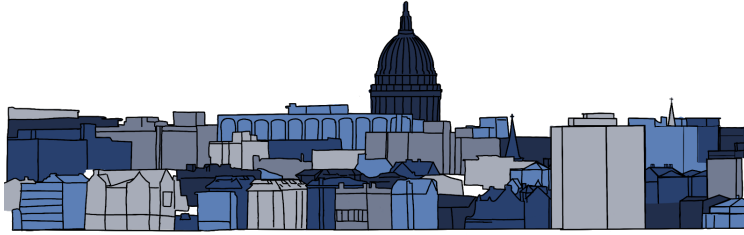
The developer has created adjustments to its site circulation plan, but the committee does not believe that the adjustments from the previous proposal (which was rejected on the grounds of lack of complete site circulation) will be enough to allow for neighboring residents to enter and exit their own homes, separate from Hub II.

### **Core Spaces History**

Residents argued that Core Spaces has a problematic history here in Madison as well as in other municipalities/neighborhoods.

To begin with, in Madison, the James and the Hub I were both developed by Core Spaces, but then sold off to other management companies. Those other management companies, over their tenure at both apartment complexes, caused for a range of complaints ranging from splintering floors over the winter not addressed in a timely manner, week-long delays to apartment maintenance issues, noise complaints due to late-night partying, unauthorized guests sharing each others' wristbands to enter the buildings' rooftop pools, and more.

Most significantly, the Hub built in the University of Kentucky in Lexington reported uncontrollable shifts in room temperature, addressed at a much later date than necessary or



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appropriate. There were also significant construction-related issues, ranging from electrical power outlets not working for 11 days at a time, to bathroom faucets coming off their walls after minimal use, as listed [here](#).

In August 2018, in spite of promises to become the “best place to live off-campus,” Core Spaces provided its residents in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, an [unsafe building to live in](#), including balcony doors without handles, delayed move-in due to incomplete craftsmanship, and several windows without latches.

Similarly, in September 2019, student tenants and other parties in the area have been gravely [concerned](#) about the security and safety of the Hub construction in West Lafayette, Purdue. At the same time, in East Lansing, Michigan, residents of the Hub Mount complained about [“dysfunctional elevators, trash stacking up, construction dust, and an unresponsive management staff.”](#)

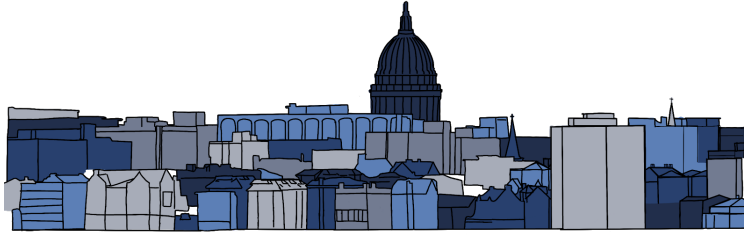
As of October 2020, Core Spaces has [sold](#) its Student Housing Project to GHM Capital Partners and AGC Equity Partners, serving affiliates of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. This is antithetical to recent messaging from Core Spaces regarding their “re-evaluation of its business model,” as they have stated in our Steering Committee meetings.

As of December 2020, the Core Spaces’ Hub proposal in Athens, Georgia, was [rejected](#) by their corresponding Plan Commission on the grounds of its overly large mass & scale overtaking the narrow/one-way Mitchell and Thomas street nearby. Similar to the Madison Hub II, varying iterations of their proposals in Athens were minimal and just superficially addressed underlying planning concerns that were raised by Plan Commissioners there.

The steering committee expresses a [strong lack of confidence](#) in Core Spaces’ ability to manage the Hub II. At steering committee meetings, the developers argued that their business model now accommodates for long-term management of the Hub II; the steering committee is not convinced this will happen.

### **Massing, Size and Scale**

Without the two stories, still, the massing, size and scale are entirely excessive.



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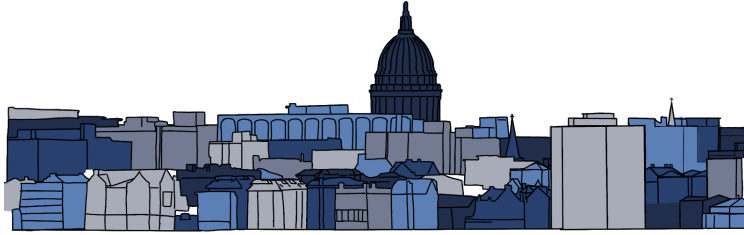
By massing, the steering committee understands that it refers to the size and/or bulk. “Bulk” is the term used to indicate the size and setbacks of buildings or structures and the location of such buildings or structures with respect to one another, and includes the following:

- (a) Size and height of buildings.
- (b) Location of exterior walls at all levels in relation to lot lines, streets or to other buildings.
- (c) Floor area of buildings in relation to lot area (floor area ratio). (Am. by ORD-15-00033, 4-8-15)
- (d) All open spaces allocated to buildings; and
- (e) Amount of lot area provided per dwelling unit or lodging room.

Criterion (a), especially in relation to the neighboring buildings, would not be met. The existing character of the area will be significantly disrupted and impaired; this project will contain over 120,000 GSF (gross square feet), 106 units, and 351 beds. Almost none of the neighboring 3- or 4-story projects will contain nearly as many GSF, units, bedrooms or beds, ranging from 11,000 to 15,000 GSF. Some notable exceptions on N Henry St go as far as 65,723 GSF or 93,092 GSF, but those are not nearly as extensive as the Hub II and are not immediately adjacent to 126 Langdon St. In terms of cubic feet, the Hub II will be over 1,502,000 cubic feet, whereas its neighboring buildings will be between 100,000 cubic feet and 220,000 cubic feet at most. (Please see [126 Langdon in Context](#) submitted by James McFadden, an architect and attendee of the steering committee, for more information regarding this issue.)

It is also worth comparing this project in relation to its predecessor, that has not met the relevant criteria.

Project Area Analysis	12/19 scheme	12/20 scheme
Units	106	88
Beds	351	373
RSF	107,423	104,594
Common	24,194	19,757
Amenity	5,145	3,745



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GSF	136,762	128,096
Balcony / Terrace / Green Roof	5,684	10,352
Mechanical Area	-	6,340
Parking / Loading Area	11,780	12,598
Bike Spaces	-	114
Gross Buildable Area	154,226	157,386
Gross Enclosed Area	148,542	147,034
FAR Area	136,762	128,096

As shown above, the changes are not significant. The number of units have decreased concurrent with an increase in beds, both marginal adjustments. It is worth noting that the green roof component of this building will be doubled in response to the neighborhood concerns - and this is a positive. However, this does not respond to the concerns that the Plan Commission had re: massing, size and scale.

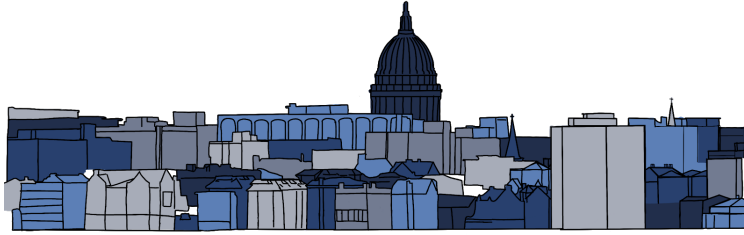
Parts (b) and (c), which specify the front facade, exterior of the building, and rear exterior, either change marginally or do not change. This is observed in the fact that the new proposal contains only marginally fewer units, and some feet back in the front and eastern side of the building. The rear separation from Langdon Street in fact remains what it was before the proposal, which was deemed unacceptable by the former steering committee. The lot area per dwelling unit will be enough to accommodate the tenants in them, but the sheer number of units in the entire project submittal continue to impede the wellbeing, character and future of the neighborhood.

### Bonus Stories

According to the *Downtown Plan* pp. 36-7 and its *Appendix C: Additional Building Height*, the proposed project's height is restricted at 5 stories and an additional 2 stories would be granted if

- i. the final project is compatible with the existing or planned character of the surrounding area;
- ii. contains a demonstrably higher quality than could be achieved without bonus stories, and
- iii. the





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scale, massing, and design of it “compliment[s] and positively contribute[s] to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create[s] a pleasing visual relationship with them.” Parts i. and ii. of these expectations are listed also in the Conditional Use Standard 6.14(a) and (b).

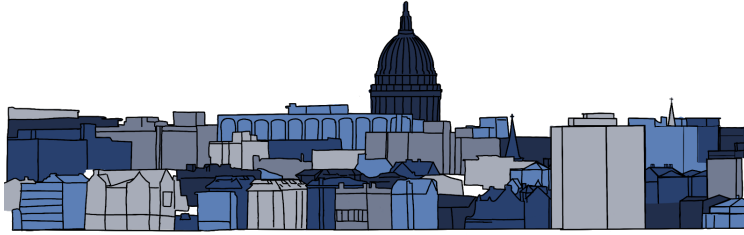
According to the members of the steering committee, none of the relevant criteria are achieved, as listed above. This building project will have an adverse impact on Langdon Street’s historic character. It already falls under a Nationally Registered Historic District and while that is not a Local Historic District, the Plan Commission should recognize that it is adjacent to a Local Historic District. While the two additional stories will provide more luxury-style housing to the residents of the area, that and a rooftop pool do not make the building any more or less exceptional. In other words, the quantity of the residential living spaces will be significantly impacted, but that is irrelevant to quality of living. Finally, criterion iii. is not relevant, though it must be noted that this sets the precedent for the neighboring Mansion Hills Historic District to be impacted.

### **Affordability**

At previous meetings, Core Spaces has differentiated itself as a luxury student housing developer who is unable to include affordable housing in the proposal to make it financially feasible. They have also suggested that “luxury” housing today is affordable housing tomorrow. They have pointed out that market-rate affordable housing was different from federally or locally defined affordability, which is the best of what they were able to achieve, suggesting that their housing would be at or slightly below the market-rate price. At both the neighborhood meeting and general meetings, attendees argued that this would become a significant barrier for low-income students seeking affordable housing. Excessive amenities like pools detract from affordability and have not been addressed since the previous proposal.

### **Subleasing**

The steering committee understands that the developers will manage all leases and will not allow individual students’ subletting their units by themselves. Some students who attended steering committee meetings argued if there were no provisions to let students do so, that this placed an additional and unnecessary burden on student tenants to pay rent for the apartment



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they did not always live in, when they are required to travel to their family homes due to the COVID-19 virus, live in other cities or states for job internships, or study abroad.

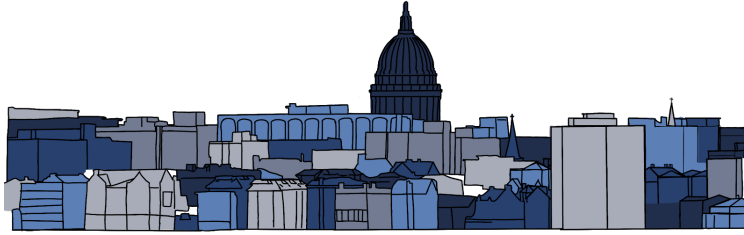
Other members of the steering committee felt that the building staff will not be able to consistently manage those tenants who sublease illegally. Even without a fob, anyone can often just “wait outside the main door for five minutes,” after which point amicable residents of the Hub II may let them in inadvertently. While these kinds of security problems are not uncommon throughout the area, it is up to the Hub II management staff to ensure that such unauthorized guests do not habitually rely on already existing tenants’ to be let into the building.

At the steering committee, the developer stated that they invest a concerted effort into getting to know their residents and monitoring non-residents consistently entering the Hub II premises. The steering committee is not convinced that these efforts will solve the underlying problem. Especially when there is different staff monitoring the security at different hours, and non-professional staff during night times (i.e after 6pm), anyone can easily take advantage of an existing lease to sublease to unauthorized tenants. Community assistance staff who are expected to avoid the issue of illegal subletting cannot be expected to do so, even if the entire management plan is presented to the City or Police department.

### **Driveway**

Currently, there is an informal agreement between the neighboring fraternities and sororities to keep the driveway adjacent to the Tri Delta house and 126 Langdon clean (on either side), regularly plowed, and properly maintained. The steering committee understands that historically, developers figured out the necessary or appropriate easements or informal agreements with the neighborhood and/or City staff, after the project would be approved by the Plan Commission.

Knowing the complicated history of the Hub II project’s approval process, some members of the steering committee ask that the developer ensure that they include a heated driveway in their management plan and that they not shift the entire burden of the maintenance of the driveway adjacent to the Hub II onto any of the neighboring houses. (Having said this, some members voiced concerns about a heated driveway not being sustainable or efficient.) The steering committee expects that a full disclosure of agreements regarding the protection of the driveway be provided with written documentation to the City of Madison.



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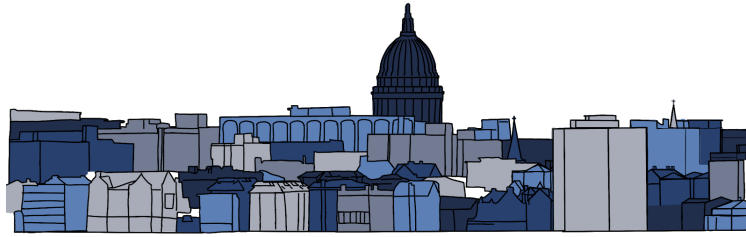
Without such an endeavor, students, local residents and alumni who enter the Hub II building will be faced with very slippery conditions walking up and down an elevated path. Cars would not be able to move effectively and even those who are parked temporarily can slip downward - to reiterate, at no point should the maintenance duties of this sort fall on neighboring fraternities and sororities.

### Site Circulation

Per the previous public input at the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission meetings, and the former iteration of this steering committee, the Langdon St is already overburdened with vehicle, pedestrian, skateboard and bicycle traffic.

Moreover, the parking available is already woefully inadequate for the residential population on the street. Hub II will have no guest parking so any guests (especially on events such as parents weekend), will be competing for the very few spots on the street. This is already a safety issue for the heavy pedestrian traffic. The existing driveways are often blocked by double parked delivery vehicles making it difficult for residents to gain access to their parking lots. (This also causes safety concerns for emergency vehicles being unable to get to the houses.) On move-in and move-out days, there is no way Langdon St can accommodate 350 more students moving on August 15th - and despite the committee being made aware of plans to schedule move-in/out times, there will be significant, unhealthy and disruptive congestion on the street during this time, every year.

The addition of the parking for uber type vehicles is appreciated but will not help with larger delivery vehicles and semi-trucks that make daily deliveries on that block. The steering committee acknowledges that the new proposal now contains four loading stalls, rather than two. However, it is also noteworthy that two of them would be in a garage, of which the door will be closed most of the time and without signage. This will certainly address part of the problem associated with EatStreet delivery and Uber drivers crowding the area and making it hard for tenants, pedestrians, and community members to move through the street, in and out of this building and the neighboring ones, but it does not resolve the underlying issue. Moreover, new delivery drivers who want to serve students will find it difficult to do so with only four loading stalls. On Monday nights, a lot of fraternities and sororities host Chapter meetings, during which this area will be especially crowded. The steering committee also requests that a condition of approval, should this project be accepted, be that signage for off-street parking be made visible.



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During the construction of the building, it is expected that the site and neighboring driveway allow for circulation of visitors throughout the area.

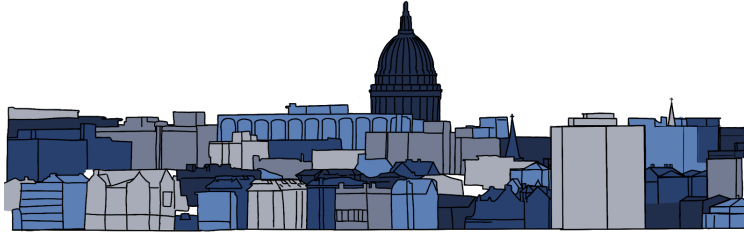
### **Building Management Plan**

The proposed plan includes student residents or “Community Assistants (building residents who work part time at the property)” who would be an integral part of the property management team. Most of the steering committee and several house directors are concerned that during peak times of the year, resident students will not be able to provide the authority required to enforce proper management when situations arise. The steering committee is concerned with the lack of building management after hours. The proposed plan cites the use of third-party security during special events, but the events are not defined. Members of the steering committee request the following measures be taken.

- A third-party security sweep of the building be performed twice per night, every night.
- Third-party security be used to close the rooftop pool every night.
- Third-party security must be on site off hours for the first 3 weekends (Friday, Saturday) and last 2 of each semester.
- Third-party security be on site for all home football and basketball game days and nights and for the day before and day of Halloween.
- Third-party security must also be on site for large Greek live events like rush, etc.

### **Sustainability**

In terms of sustainability, members of the steering committee appreciated that the Hub II project will contain LED lighting with sensors to ensure efficient light energy use. Members would like to see a green roof come to fruition and expect that Core Spaces revisit the Neighborhood Association to discuss how this will be implemented - should the project be approved. Members of the committee also strongly expressed the use of multiple bins for recycling, including mixed paper and plastic at the very least. During meetings, this request was not received positively by the developer as it may confuse residents on which trash to throw where, but members of the steering committee continue to express the importance of proper recycling and trash management.



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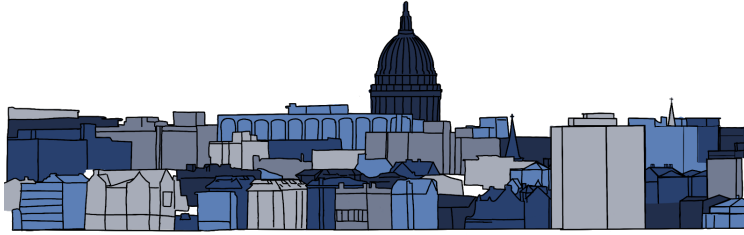
Members of the committee are grateful that the developer will incorporate energy conservation tactics in energy-efficient appliances, also. The committee is aware that the developers will meet the National Green Building Standard, which is entirely necessary and appropriate. However, the massing, size and scale of the project remain excessive - and that itself is a sustainability issue.

### **General Welfare and Security Issues**

Members of the steering committee argued that there were several instances when the students in neighboring sororities and fraternities in relation to 126 Langdon would leave their current residences to engage in late night partying, as it is not allowed in Greek houses where they live, to other building complexes such as the Hub I and the James. At the Greek houses, there was a widely felt sentiment that this would lead to students coming home intoxicated and creating an unhealthy environment among their peers. With 126 Langdon so close to where they are currently, that type of behavior would only be exacerbated should the Hub II be approved. The developers themselves have acknowledged that the management team at the Hub II would not be able to restrict partying from happening preemptively and during late night hours. Moreover, given the current underage drinking culture on the UW-Madison campus, the Hub II would become another avenue which could have a deleterious impact on such students' mental health and academic success.

The rooftop pool will contain an amplified sound system which will have a disadvantageous impact on the safety, security and wellbeing of the neighboring residents. Steering committee representatives argued that several Greek Houses nearby do not have air conditioning in them, which means they would regularly tend to keep their windows open - which in turn would lead to them not having a sufficiently quiet study environment. These noise issues would still be present should the students in Greek Houses close their windows and turn on personal fans, as the sound will continue to be uncomfortably audible, as it had been for the Hub I.

It is unclear whether windows of the Hub II would have screens on them. It is not uncommon for a handful of students in those Greek houses, especially sororities, to describe anecdotal experiences of "a man stuck in a tree to watch the girls change clothes." It is unclear how the developer will respond to this type of issue that could instead occur between the Hub II and neighboring houses. Furthermore, trash-throwing from windows has been a recurring issue and could not be prevented without such a protective measure, that goes beyond something that



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tenants would sign off not to do on their leases and “forget about anyway.” The steering committee recommends window screens.

Should the developers incorporate their own internal business to provide internet services to the residents of the Hub II, the steering committee asks that it not be coaxial and instead be fiber optic. There have been several instances in the past for neighboring Greek houses to face difficulties with high volumes of internet usage on a coaxial system, affecting the online learning of all residents.