



River North Residents Association

February 22, 2006

Burton R. Natarus
42nd Ward Alderman, City of Chicago

Mr. Moises Cukierman
President, Urban Land Division, Lennar Communities of Chicago, L.L.C.

River North Residents Association Members

Re: 469 West Huron Street, Chicago

Representatives of Lennar Communities of Chicago, L.L.C., Hartshorn-Plunkard Architecture and Schain, Burney, Ross and Citron, Ltd. met with the River North Residents Association (RNRA) Executive Committee on December 12, 2005 and with members of the River North community at large on February 8, 2006 to discuss the mixed-use development proposed for above referenced property.

Pursuant to these discussions, the RNRA has published site plans, elevations and related information on its web site and has conducted a survey to solicit and collect input from the community about the proposed project. The survey results are summarized below

Survey Period	Total # of Responses	Total # of Buildings
February 11 – 21, 2006	195	26

Distribution of Responses by Building					
Property	#	%	Property	#	%
520 W Huron	29	14.9	421 W Huron	4	2.1
645 N Kingsbury	27	13.8	758 N Larrabee	3	1.5
510 W Erie	25	12.8	363 W Superior	3	1.5
411 W Ontario	19	9.7	City Club Town Homes	2	1.0
600 North Kingsbury	15	7.7	420 W Grand	1	0.5
550 North Kingsbury	11	5.6	325 W Huron	1	0.5
720 N Larrabee	9	4.6	River Place on the Park	1	0.5
653 N Kingsbury	8	4.1	River Village	1	0.5
375-435 W Erie	7	3.6	70 W Huron	1	0.5
400 W Ontario	7	3.6	540 N State	1	0.5
900 N Kingsbury	6	3.1	70 W Huron	1	0.5
360 W Illinois	4	2.1	451 W Huron	1	0.5
500 W Superior	4	2.1	400 N LaSalle	1	0.5

Question Number 1: “How do you feel about the proposal to construct a single taller and narrower building in place of two broader but shorter buildings?”

Strongly or Generally Support		Neutral		Strongly or Generally Oppose	
#	%	#	%	#	%
96	50.3	20	10.5	75	39.3
Summary of Advantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates more open space and desirable retail and commercial opportunities • More attractive than the two-building plan, less dense with fewer units and more parking • A significant improvement over the current use of the property • Appreciation for developer’s reputation and efforts to engage the community 					
Summary of Disadvantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impairment of views from units in nearby buildings, potentially decreasing their value • Another tall building casts shadows, blocks light and adds to a congested skyline • Potential for increased traffic congestion and exacerbated public parking shortage • Detrimental impact on the architectural character and “feel” of the neighborhood 					

Question Number 2: “How do you feel about the proposal to construct a two-story, 14,000 square foot retail/office building on the site?”

Strongly or Generally Support		Neutral		Strongly or Generally Oppose	
#	%	#	%	#	%
132	69.5	31	16.3	27	14.2
Summary of Advantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality retail and commercial spaces are needed and will enhance the neighborhood • Suggested tenants include upscale or gourmet grocery, ethnic restaurant, ice cream shop, boutiques, pharmacy, physicians, dentists and other professional services 					
Summary of Disadvantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed retail/office building is too small and surface parking will be insufficient • Retail facilities will diminish the area’s residential character and add to traffic congestion • Package liquor, fast food, currency exchange or more salons or cleaners are not desirable 					

Question Number 3: “How do you feel about the proposal to include a 9,000 square foot, privately maintained, public-access park?”

Strongly or Generally Support		Neutral		Strongly or Generally Oppose	
#	%	#	%	#	%
155	81.6	20	10.5	15	7.9
Summary of Advantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park, landscaping and rooftop green space benefits the community and heightens values • Provides welcome relief, beauty and variety in an increasingly congested community • A positive addition if it is well lit, well maintained, secure and dog friendly 					
Summary of Disadvantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park may not be well maintained or may be spoiled by irresponsible dog owners • The park may attract homeless people or create other security concerns • Although technically public access, residents of other buildings may not feel welcome 					

Question Number 4: “How do you feel about the proposed 469 West Huron project in general?”

Strongly or Generally Support	Neutral	Strongly or Generally Oppose
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#	%	#	%	#	%
109	57.4	22	11.6	59	31.0
Summary of Advantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More thoughtful use of available space with desirable features like park and retail • Streetscaping and support for a children’s play area in Erie Park are positive aspects • Design with no F.A.R. increase is preferable to many alternative development scenarios 					
Summary of Disadvantages Mentioned in Commentary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstructed views, blocked sunlight, increased traffic and parking congestion • Loss of intimate neighborhood feeling and negative impact on existing values • Noise, mess, disruption and public safety concerns during construction 					

While we will always endeavor to improve our effectiveness, we were gratified to learn that a majority of the respondents (89.5%) felt the RNRA did an excellent or very good job of informing and collecting feedback from the community about this proposal.

Neighborhood development obviously has both positive and negative implications. Most residents of River North recognize the value of expanding the tax base to pay for city services and of transforming vacant or underutilized properties into more attractive, safer, revenue-generating additions to the neighborhood. They know that business owners require certain levels of pedestrian and vehicular traffic before opening new stores and offices and they recognize that developers have the right to build on the properties they acquired for this purpose, subject to applicable rules. A busier skyline, increased congestion and disruption during construction are some of the unavoidable consequences of a desirable community.

The RNRA believes that developers should look beyond the viability of a particular project and endeavor to contribute to the quality of life in the community and the value of local real estate. The due diligence for each proposal should include an independent assessment of its potential impact on traffic, security, parking, pet facilities and green space. Projects should be designed to improve, rather than degrade, these essential elements. Each development plan should also consider worker parking, truck staging, work hours, site lighting and other construction protocol matters in order to minimize noise, disruption and inconvenience to existing residents and businesses.

If development is conducted in this way, we believe that residents will generally be more supportive and that by working together to cultivate River North’s reputation as a safe, vibrant and desirable community, all parties will benefit in the long run.

Please contact the River North Residents Association (info@rivernorthresidents.com) with any questions regarding the information presented above.

Regards,

Brian Israel
RNRA President

Cc: RNRA Executive Committee