

2/3/11 Testimony of Barbara Kahlow
on Zoning Commission Case No. 06-11A/06-12A – GWU's Foggy Bottom Campus:
2nd-Stage PUD, 1st-Stage PUD Modification in Square 103

I, Barbara Kahlow, live at 800-25th Street, N.W. I am testifying on behalf of the West End Citizens Association (WECA), the oldest citizens organization in the Foggy Bottom-West End area. One of the WECA's goals is maintaining the quality of life for the residential community in Foggy Bottom-West End.

Regarding the George Washington University's (GWU's) application for a "2nd-Stage PUD, 1st-Stage PUD Modification, and Further Processing of an Approved Campus Plan for Multiple Lots in Square 103" (Case No. 06-11A/06-12A) (which is zoned R-5-D), since 8/30/10, the WECA has raised multiple concerns to the Office of Planning (OP) and GWU about significant adverse impacts to traffic and safety, especially pedestrian safety for our elderly community. In fact, on 8/30, the WECA requested that DC conduct an independent traffic study since GWU's traffic study clearly evidenced adverse impacts.

- OP neither included in its pre-setdown report the concerns which the WECA had communicated to it nor attached them for the Commission's information.
- The DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) has not yet conducted an independent traffic study.

Pursuant to our August 2010 request to GWU, on 1/20/11, the WECA and GWU finally met with DDOT about DDOT's proposal to use the public alley between F and G Streets and running from 20th to 21st Streets for ingress and egress for the 450 parking spaces (392 below-grade and 58 surface) instead of either 20th Street, as GWU initially proposed, or, the more logical, G Street since the lettered streets in this area have significantly less traffic than the numbered streets which have heavy traffic, especially during the AM and PM rush hours. The 1/20 meeting was followed by a 1/21 WECA-DDOT on-site inspection (GWU was invited but unable to attend). This inspection revealed multiple problems – especially regarding safety – for use of the Square 103 alley. The WECA will discuss these in more detail tonight and will be aided by Joseph Chisholm who works in the immediate neighborhood.

I wanted to remind the Commission that, as part of GWU's 1957 E Street Planned Unit Development (PUD) (in Square 122, ZC Case No. 01-17M/93-5F/91-18P) and to protect pedestrian safety, the WECA secured GWU amenity funding for a needed traffic light at nearby 21st and F Streets. To our knowledge, this light has prevented any more serious pedestrian accidents.

WECA's Pre-Setdown Comments to OP

Here is the gist of the WECA's 8/30/10 e-mail to OP in which we requested an independent traffic study for the instant proposal and the broader immediate area and OP's forwarding our concerns to DDOT.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-11A/06-12A
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 06-11A/06-12A
EXHIBIT NO. 37

From: Barbara Kahlow ...
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2010 5:19 PM
To: 'Lawson, Joel (OP)'
Cc: ...
Subject: initial WECA concerns on GW's 8/17/10 Sq. 103 PUD application

Joel – ..., I am writing this e-mail to share some of our initial concerns about the George Washington University's (GWU's) 8/17/10 Sq. 103 PUD application entitled "Foggy Bottom Campus Plan / PUD Square 103 Development Site – Phase I." The WECA was a "Party" to the Campus Plan "omnibus" PUD case, including this site. FYI, this is the 1st of the 16 development sites with any post-Campus Plan submissions.

Our primary concern relates to the need for an independent traffic study since the ingress & egress is through a 2-lane now 16' (but to be enlarged to 20') public alleyway between 20th & 21st Streets between F and G Streets. The proposal calls for 450 parking spaces (392 below ground + 58 interim surface) & admits in its 8/9 Transportation Impact Study (Exh. H) to adverse changes in traffic capacity. First, see the chart on p. 21, showing a change from B LOS to F LOS for the 21st & Alley intersection & from A LOS to D LOS for the 20th St. & Alley intersection. There are multiple statements about the adverse impact, e.g.,

- p. iv - "The approach of the intersection of 21st St. & the Alley will operate at a LOS F during the afternoon peak hour. This is due to the high volumes of pedestrians combined with heavy commuter traffic volumes. No mitigation measures are necessary to alleviate this delay, because the negative impact of this condition is limited to drivers leaving the redevelopment site. There are no negative impacts to the study area & surrounding land uses. Thus, no traffic management measures are needed to mitigate impacts of site-generated traffic."
- p. 20, Future with Development – "During the afternoon peak hour, the westbound approach of the intersection of 21st St. & the Alley will operate at a LOS F due to the high volumes of pedestrians combined with heavy commuter traffic volumes."
- pp. 20-21, Capacity Analysis Findings – "No mitigation measures are necessary to alleviate this delay, because the negative impact of this condition is limited to drivers leaving the redevelopment site."

The WECA believes that the adverse impact will not only be on those leaving the redevelopment site. And, the WECA asks that an independent traffic study also examine the cumulative impact due to the nearby enormous Square 54 development (from 22nd to 23rd & from I to Washington Circle), including a new Whole Foods at 22nd & I Streets.

Lastly, please forward our concerns to DDOT. Thank you. – Barbara for the WECA

This e-mail shows that even GWU's traffic consultant identified adverse impacts, resulting in a rating of Level of Service (LOS) "F" due to "high volumes of pedestrians combined with heavy commuter traffic volumes."

GWU's 8/17/10 Application states, "the application **will be** referred to both agencies [OP & DDOT] for their review and report" (emphasis added, p. 31). In addition, GWU admits without specificity that its plan includes, "eliminating on-street parking at a few locations" (Exh. H, p. 5).

GWU's Pre-Hearing and Supplemental Pre-Hearing Statements

On 11/2/10 and 1/14/11, GWU filed its Pre-Hearing Statement and a Supplemental Pre-Hearing Statement, respectively. The WECA would like to correct mis-statements in the latter. Specifically, it states:

- "the project ... will not have a negative or adverse impact on surrounding vehicular or the pedestrian networks" (p. 4)
- "This projected impact ... is limited to the PM peak hour only" (p. 4)
- "WECA's concerns ... are unwarranted" (p. 5)
- "we [GWU] expect FEMS [Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department] will indicate that it has no objection" (p. 5).

These statements are false.

OP and DDOT Reports

On 1/27/11, DDOT issued a very partial report with "conditional" support and which does not reflect any of the issues raised by the WECA or DDOT in its 1/20-21 meetings. Therefore, it looks like the document was authored before these meetings. In addition, it does not reflect any independent traffic analysis and does not touch on key issues relating to the alley, e.g., a DDOT discovered dangerous obstructed view leaving the alley into 21st Street. As of 1/30, no OP report was posted on OP's website.

Problems with Ingress and Egress from the Alley

WECA Officer Sara Maddux who lives on 21st Street one block from the Square 103 alley will provide her 1st-hand observations with traffic in this immediate area and will discuss the multiple problems associated with use of the alley for ingress and egress of cars using 450 parking spaces. Her testimony will be followed by Joe Chisholm's who will focus on safety concerns.

Thank you for consideration of the WECA's views.