

September 13, 2006

Carol Mitten, Chairman
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South
Washington DC 20001

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Dear Chairman Mitten:

I write to you today as an employee of a West End business, a District of Columbia resident, and a George Washington University alumnus. I want to express my support for the 2006 George Washington University Campus Plan, its aggressive strategy for development within the boundaries of the campus, and the university's vastly improved record of achievement over the past few years of growing without further encroaching on its neighbors.

When I arrived in Foggy Bottom in 1999, university expansion was directed to the north and to the west. The university had recently purchased what would become the Hall on Virginia Avenue and would soon purchase the building now known as the Aston. Local residents feared that the university was on a march to Georgetown. However, since that time (and largely in response to the concerns of the local community), GWU has centralized development within the university's existing borders and taken great strides to refocus campus life towards the southern edge of the campus. The new Elliot School of International Affairs Building (1957 E Street NW) is a shining example of how the university has added classroom space and undergraduate housing to an area of the campus dominated by government office building and not residential housing. Recent additions of a Business School building, the Media and Public Affairs building, and the Ivory Tower dorm further demonstrate how GWU can meet its needs for growth with intelligent development within its own borders.

Campus Plan conditions committing the university to removing all undergraduate students from the Hall on Virginia Avenue, the Aston, City Hall, and Columbia Plaza further demonstrate GWU's commitment to this smart growth strategy. This will significantly alter the landscape of the student population in the West End and Foggy Bottom, and represents the university's good faith effort to find housing solutions within its boundaries. I believe that those who argue that GWU cannot grow responsibly within its boundaries have not looked at the progress they have made over the last few years nor fully considered the university's plans for the future.

The university has been criticized for embarking on a strategy that derives income from rental properties in and around the campus. However, this strategy is a creative response to the problem of a comparatively small endowment that burdens many former commuter schools. GWU's continued success in as a world-class institution depends on this strategy until such time as the alumni base can meet those needs. Also, detractors fail to note that those properties would more than likely have ended up in the hands of other developers and other major corporation. If development is going to occur anyway, who better to derive profits from the development of these areas than a public-spirited, local university?

I don't have to tell you the importance of having world-class educational facilities in the District of Columbia. I can say from experience that undergraduate educational institutions like GWU bring new residents and new life to the District. As a resident who has adopted this city as my home, I can say my positive experience at GWU had a dramatic effect on my decision to continue residing here. Likewise, for the city to retain residents like myself it will need top tier post-graduate education programs and quality jobs – both indisputable outcomes of the university's growth. I strongly urge you to adopt George Washington University's Campus Plan and help build the successful, vibrant, dynamic District of Columbia, Foggy Bottom, and West End that we would all like to see in the future.

Sincerely,



Kent Springfield

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-11

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
EXHIBIT NO. 77

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