

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to read this brief statement into the record in support of the George Washington University's Campus Plan proposal. My name is Jeff Marootian, and I am an alumnus of the George Washington University and a former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in ANC-2A.

The University, like many large institutions, has for many years been met with serious opposition from some vocal community residents. Having worked closely with some of these individuals, I understand and recognize the depth of their concerns. But I also recognize that often much of this opposition has been rooted inherently in the process. I have taken the time to carefully review in detail the merits of this plan, but I am here to talk primarily about the process that the University has undertaken in its development.

For over two years the University and community members have been engaged in conversations about the future of the Foggy Bottom campus. The University and the Office of Planning developed a community-based planning process that has included residents, students, and faculty alike. The process was not simply a paper-based plan -- it was fully implemented. Community residents played an active role in the process and as a result contributed significantly to the development of the plan. This type of collaborative effort is a tremendous step forward for the University and for the community in which it resides.

The process included a series of open community meetings held during the summer and fall of 2005 co-sponsored by the DC Office of Planning, GW and ANC 2A, and numerous small-group meetings with civic associations, businesses, churches, institutions, and neighborhood residents to identify issues and seek suggestions.

The University hosted information sessions and also a three-day Urban Land Institute Panel which included two roundtable sessions for members of the community.

The University developed a website as resource with information regarding GW planning and development activities, including copies of the application materials submitted to the zoning commission, a comprehensive "issues exhibit" documenting stakeholder input and comment, and all presentations made throughout the community-based planning process.

ZONING COMMISSION
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CASE NO. 06-11

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Over the course of the past few years, the University has also tremendously enhanced its efforts to meet the needs of its neighbors. Simple steps, like creating a phone line for residents to call if there is a noise disturbance or issue involving a student, have gone a long way to improve relations and also the quality of life for everyone in Foggy Bottom. The University has invested resources into genuinely fostering improvements as a good neighbor. This planning process is an extension of the positive working relationship that has been developing during this time.

As an alumnus and former active community resident, I commend the University for fostering a collaborative partnership with its neighbors and for including as many stakeholders as possible in the planning process.

Thank you.