

**Comments of Mitchell Front in Support of the George Washington University
FOGGY BOTTOM CAMPUS PLAN: 2006-2025 in front of the District of
Columbia Zoning Commission, September 25, 2006.**

Good Evening members of the Zoning Commission. My name is Mitch Front, and I live at 2414 Eye St., NW in the Foggy Bottom Historic District. I have lived at my current address since 1999, but I have lived within the same two-block radius for almost 15 years.

I was never a student at George Washington University, nor do I have any professional ties to the University. I moved to the Foggy Bottom neighborhood because it is a nice, quiet, and safe little area of town. More importantly, I moved there because of its convenience to every place else in the city.

I did not move to Foggy Bottom because of its proximity to George Washington University. However, over the years, I have come to appreciate GWU as a great neighbor. The university provides many programs and services that enrich the neighborhood.

One thing that I recognize, above all else, is that I have chosen to live in the city. I understand the good and the bad that come with urban living: things like traffic, dirt, services, crime. I expect new development. Old buildings are torn down to make room for new buildings.

I know that the University is growing. I understand that their current campus plan does not adequately reflect their planned growth. This new Campus Plan addresses the school's needs.

And frankly, I applaud the fact that they have chosen a "grow up, not out" approach. I am happy that the school has, for the time being, chosen to remain within their current boundaries. I am familiar with many of the provisions of the proposed Campus Plan, and **I endorse it.**

I would also like to add that I have never felt that I have been excluded from the University's planning processes. If ever I have concerns or have questions about anything that GWU is doing, there are people at the university that I can talk to. For example, Bernard Demczuk, Assistant Vice President for District of Columbia Affairs, and Michael Akin, Director of the Office of District of Columbia and Foggy Bottom/West End Affairs, have always made themselves available.

The campus of GWU is one of the defining characteristics of my neighborhood. The campus is clean and safe. As a result of that, the neighborhoods surrounding the campus are clean and safe.

I can honestly say that my community is a better place for having GWU as a neighbor.

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I do, however, have a specific concern about growth in my neighborhood. Parking is unduly difficult. It is nearly impossible to find street parking in my neighborhood, let alone on my street. There are several large apartment buildings in Foggy Bottom Historic District. Clearly, higher density development results in more demand for parking spaces.

And, obviously, I have concerns when the University presents a plan that calls for higher density development. I like the fact that GWU has chosen to develop within its current boundaries.

The proposed Campus Plan only considers parking requirements on the campus. It does not consider the parking ramifications in the neighborhoods off campus. Students who live outside of my neighborhood park on my street on a daily basis. Whether for a few hours to attend class, or overnight to attend a party, a good number of cars parked in the Foggy Bottom Historic District belong to GWU students.

While students are a major contributor to the parking problem, of course, they are not the only cause. For example, almost every evening there are people headed to the Kennedy Center looking for free parking on the street. Also, every evening, employees on their way to work overnight shifts at the George Washington University Hospital park their cars on our streets. Most of these cars have Maryland and Virginia tags.

I would suggest that stricter parking enforcement, and tougher parking regulations could help alleviate these concerns. I would also suggest that the university has a stake in making that happen, for example, through supporting legislation to help alleviate parking problems in the Foggy Bottom Historic District. In fact, the university would be welcomed as a hero, even by the harshest critics, if they were to spearhead such a program.

I am familiar with the proposed Campus Plan, as it relates to parking and traffic issues. According to the pre-hearing submissions of July 13, 2006, there are currently 3467 parking spots in 19 on-campus garages and lots, and an additional 635 street spaces. The plan does propose that several on-street parking spaces on Eye Street be eliminated. However, the plan also anticipates the creation of 1027 new spaces.

I also note that the plan encourages use of public transportation and pedestrian traffic. The University is clearly making an effort to alleviate future parking and traffic problems.

Again, the Campus Plan only takes into consideration parking within the campus boundaries. So, one impact of future growth remains a little murky. How will an increase in development affect parking in my already crowded, off-campus neighborhood?

Thank you.