

VAN NESS STREET RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to Preserving the Residential Character of Van Ness Street

Proposed Modifications to the Proposed Campus Plan of the University of the District of Columbia (Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A)

Witness List

Brenda Viehe-Naess --- overview

Allison Evans --- mother with young children

Andrew Boesel --- student enrollment issues

Glen Harley on behalf of William Harley --- 3700 block impacted

Millie Coleman Groobey --- traffic observations

Barbara Oliver --- parking observations

Philip Kogan --- Veazey street residents also impacted by expansion

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

11-02A

EXHIBIT NO.

31

VAN NESS STREET RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to Preserving the Residential Character of Van Ness Street

Proposed Modifications to the Proposed Campus Plan of the University of the District of Columbia (Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A)

May 25, 2011

The Van Ness Street Residents Association represents the 80 households on the three tree lined blocks between Reno Road and Wisconsin Avenue. The residents are families with children, couples and singles, working professionals and retirees. Almost all homes are owner occupied. The area is a popular location for young families and professionals who want urban amenities and reasonable commutes.

The University proposes to convert the Van Ness campus from a community college serving “non-traditional” District students¹ to a traditional four year college with selective admissions providing “District residents with an affordable, quality education.”² This change assumes that the typical student will range from 18 – 22 years old, instead of the 29 – 35 year old cohort served by the current open admissions policy.³ The University moved the Community College from the Van Ness campus to the Union Station area in 2009, but continues to house the law school and business school at the Van Ness campus. The University proposes to increase enrollment at the Van Ness campus from the current 3,183 to 6,500 students by 2020.⁴ As part of the Campus Plan, the University proposes to build a new student center, improve landscaping and plaza areas, and add dormitories housing 600 students.

1. We recognize that the University has historically played an important role in providing low cost education to District residents. We strongly support education for DC residents, and hope that it will enhance their ability to find employment. We also welcome the improvements to maintenance planned as part of this expansion.
2. What we have here is two areas, adjacent to one another, with very different goals and lifestyles. The University wants a “vibrant” student life, with a large enrollment, sports teams, pep rallies, concerts, and 600 students in a dormitory.

¹ According to the University’s Mission Statement, “The University of the District of Columbia is an urban land-grant institution of higher education with an open admissions policy. It is a comprehensive public institution offering quality affordable post-secondary education to District of Columbia residents at the certificate, baccalaureate, and graduate levels. These programs will prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce, for the next level of education, for specialized employment opportunities, and life long learning.” Source, http://www.udc.edu/docs/institutional_research/Fact_book_06.pdf.

² University of District of Columbia FINAL Campus Plan, as posted on UDC website, April 8, 2011, p.18. (hereafter, the “Plan”). A revised campus plan was posted on the website on April 15 --- thereby placing neighborhood commentators at a disadvantage in responding.

³ Source, Presentation of Campus Plan at March 30 ANC Meeting.

⁴ University of District of Columbia FINAL Campus Plan, as posted on UDC website, April 8, 2011, p. 18.

The neighborhood wants a quiet area where they can raise children, restore their energy after a long day at work, and have friends over for dinner, occasionally.

3. Looking at our community's needs, it is clear that this plan was conceived as a one-sided document that ignores the existence of the low density residential area that surrounds it. At every point, when the Plan refers to residential areas, it means the apartments along Connecticut Avenue.
4. We look to the Zoning Commission to craft a final plan that recognizes the importance of both these goals, and minimizes the sources of friction between the two.
5. **Traffic** --- Van Ness Street is an east/ west route from Connecticut to Wisconsin.
 - a. Van Ness street is classified as a residential collector street, as are Albemarle, Fessenden, and Macomb. The function of a residential collector street is to connect local streets to arterial roads. However, Van Ness is NOT a cross-town arterial (as are Porter, Nebraska, and Military Road), whose function is to carry traffic from one arterial (Wisconsin) to another (Connecticut).
 - b. Van Ness is a 3 lane street, with one lane of parking. It is narrow, crowded, and any street noise is bothersome to residents.
 - c. Traffic levels are already high on Van Ness Street, and it is currently the subject of a Traffic Calming Study by DDOT.
 - d. Assertions in the *Transportation Study* that "impacts from the Campus Plan will be minimal" ignore the realities of real world transportation choices. Students, faculty and staff commute long distances, carry heavy packages, and currently choose to use private automobiles. Increased enrollment will only increase the absolute number of vehicles, despite proposals to encourage use of public transportation.
 - e. Zoning Commission should protect residents from increases in traffic levels and parking that inevitably follow from UDC's proposals to double its size, and construct new buildings without adding parking.
 - f. We ask that none of the Transportation Report's recommendations for Van Ness Street be adopted. The decision whether to add bike lanes or make other changes to Van Ness Street should be made by DDOT working in conjunction with Van Ness Street residents and the ANC.
6. **Parking** --- The Plan proceeds on the fiction that no additional parking will be needed, even if enrollment is increased. Nonetheless, the Transportation Report concedes, "based on a parking utilization study, the [main] garage operates at or above capacity during the day."⁵ ***The assumption that there will be no need for additional parking is one of the most unrealistic, untrue parts of the Plan***
 - a. Students already park on Van Ness street. Providing incentives to take mass transit will have some affect, but it will never, never eliminate all private automobile usage.

⁵ Campus Plan as of April 8, p. 15. We note that this admission was modified in Exhibit I accompanying the Final Plan.

- b. Existing parking is inadequate and should be increased. *The Commission should require the University to address the current overflow through construction of additional parking.*
 - c. In view of the UDC Traffic Report's admission that campus parking "operates at or above capacity during the day," the Plan should be amended to require the construction of additional parking as part of the construction of the Student Union, to accommodate those cars now parking on Van Ness and other neighborhood streets.
 - d. Increasing parking fees (as proposed) will only exacerbate the neighborhood's current parking problems. Fees should not be increased, but should be lowered to make the garage accessible to all students who now park in the North Cleveland Park neighborhood.
 - e. In setting parking requirements for the Student Union, the Commission should also take into account the requirement that public recreation facilities or community centers include 1 parking space for every 2,000 square feet of gross area, since the building would include a ballroom, public dining and other student and community activity spaces. These spaces are in addition to additional spaces needed to absorb the current overflow parking on Van Ness, Veazey and other North Cleveland Park streets.
 - f. Although we strongly believe that dormitories are incompatible with the low density residential neighborhood surrounding the campus, and object to their construction, we also object to granting the University an exception to the Zoning Regulation's requirement that there be 1 parking space for every 5 beds in a university dormitory. At a minimum, UDC dormitories should be required to comply with the Zoning Regulations' requirement of 120 parking spaces for 600 students in dormitories. This requirement should not be deferred until UDC begins processing of the dormitories, just prior to construction.
7. **Enrollment Level** -- The Plan fails to provide sufficient information to support the proposed enrollment level. Its "basis" for the proposed enrollment of 5,000 FTE/ 6,500 headcount is that decades ago--- in the 1980's --- there were higher enrollment levels.
- a. Unquestionably, the greater the number of students, the greater the impact of noise, traffic and objectionable behavior on our neighborhood.
 - b. Well managed non-profit organizations consistently provide information to support proposed expansions --- a "business plan" --- this would include sources of revenue, expenses, trends affecting enrollment, and, in this case, the extent to which the University's expansion will serve District residents and non-District residents, as well as foreign students.
 - c. Without such information, there is no basis to increase enrollment above the current 3,200 level.

- d. The enrollment level on this campus should take into account the need to protect the surrounding residential neighborhood from noise, traffic, parking and objectionable behavior by students.
8. **Dormitories** --- ***The dormitories should be stricken from the Plan.*** Their impact on the residential area nearby will be highly adverse, and we vigorously object to their construction. Archstone residents have direct experience with UDC student misbehavior, and vigorously object to their continued residence in the building. Shifting students' objectionable behavior from one location to another is not the solution. Moreover, it is not true that the comparable universities have on campus housing. Some do, some don't.
- a. ***If dormitories are approved***, there should be modifications that will provide greater protection against noise and traffic for the low density residential neighborhood in North Cleveland Park.
 - b. Number of beds should be reduced commensurate with reduction of student enrollment. If enrollment is 5,000 FTE, student beds should be 7.5% of FTE, or 350 –400.
 - c. Before returning for processing of dormitories, alternate sites away from Southwest corner of the campus should be explored (alone or in combination):
 - i. **Building 52** --- now houses Wilson High School's 1,500 students. Corner of Yuma and Connecticut. Connecticut already has more than 3,000 apartments, so adding student housing will not materially affect character of neighborhood. 100 parking spaces in building. Very close to Metro and buses.
 - ii. **Site 3** --- considered as site for Student Union (see Tab E, UDC April 18 Submission). Across from an existing apartment building. Short distance from Connecticut, Metro and buses. Could use Building 52 parking. Tennis courts could be relocated to Athletic Zone, and green space would be preserved. Ready access to campus athletic facilities.
 - iii. **Quadrangle site** --- Internalizing site orientation to the Quad would direct foot traffic away from neighborhood. Reinforce connection to Connecticut Avenue and Metro. Help preserve green space of playing fields. Possible to integrate 1 story performing arts center into the project, since most construction is below ground.
9. **Freeze on Additional Off-Campus Housing:** In UDC Campus Plan, Conditions of Approval, No. 5, b the University proposes to "be permitted to lease a total of up to 100 residential units for student housing, and agrees to expand its leasing authority to include properties within one mile of the Van Ness campus." Elsewhere, the University has said that the Van Ness South apartments currently house 108 students. If the same ratio applied to the additional apartments leased, that would mean approximately 348 students housed up and down Connecticut Avenue and Wisconsin, ***before construction of the dormitories.***

- a. Shifting unwanted student housing from one location to another is not a solution.
 - b. Zoning Commission should freeze off-campus housing. No lease of additional units should be permitted.
10. **Student Union** --- The Plan provides for a large student union, but provides no additional parking. It assumes the events on nights and weekends in the 500 person ballroom will never result in a single additional car parked on Van Ness or Veazey. Musicians carrying instruments and students attending a formal will take the Metro! It also assumes that community events, attended by the general public, will involve no additional automobile traffic.
 - a. Additional parking should be included in the construction of the Student Union. Students currently park in the residential neighborhood --- merely adopting a Traffic Management plan will not provide sufficient relief --- especially if enrollment is increased.
 - b. The University, working with the ANC and neighborhood residents, should develop guidelines for Student Union usage that will minimize the impact of events upon the North Cleveland Park neighborhood.
 - c. Pedestrian Cut through: As designed, Student Union cuts off a pedestrian route from Metro to the neighborhood. Design should be modified to preserve the route between Van Ness and Metro, underneath the corner of Building 39.
11. **Building 52** --- We strongly support ANC recommendation that Building 52 should be included in Campus Plan. If omitted, University could circumvent enrollment levels.
12. **Notice to Community:** Inadequate time for community review.
 - a. Conditions of Approval would provide community opportunity for review only 60 days before "Notice of Intent" for filing application for processing of new dormitories. Community needs 120 days to prepare analysis. (Section 3 of Conditions of Approval).
 - b. Section 3, b: Conditions of Approval provide community meeting to review design only 45 days before filing application for processing of dormitories. We need 90 days.
 - c. Section 21: Conditions of Approval provide only 60 days notice of intent to file for amendment to Campus Plan. We need 120 days.
13. **Van Ness Street Pedestrian Traffic** ---
 - a. Zoning should encourage replacement of the deteriorated brick sidewalks along Van Ness with concrete, which would be more durable.
14. **Construction Management Plan** --- Van Ness already has "no trucks" signs, but they are frequently ignored. The noise from heavy trucks is disruptive.
 - a. Zoning should require a plan that requires all trucks to use other access roads to Wisconsin Avenue, Maryland and Virginia bases for the construction companies.
15. **Lead Platinum:** We strongly support environmentally conscious design. Our comments have been intended to reduce impact of automobile exhaust, pollution,

noise, and congestion. But we fear the University will use LEED Platinum as a means to disregard our requests for modification. For example, adding parking would reduce points needed to gain platinum status. Zoning Commission should not take a position that would place residents at disadvantage. Should not be a part of Conditions of Approval, or, in alternative, should be LEED Silver. UDC can exceed them, but should not be allowed to use LEED as a means to disregard the impact on neighborhood.

16. **Conclusion:** UDC is an urban university with a relatively small campus --- 21 acres. It is surrounded by a residential neighborhood with young families and working professionals. UDC has traditionally operated as a commuter college, and the transformation to a large residential campus will put great strains on the traffic systems in our neighborhood, and generate increased noise on this small campus. UDC needs to recognize that it is not a suburban university on a large site that would absorb the high spirits and late hours typical of student life.
 - a. We look to the Zoning Commission to add the protections necessary to maintain a residential area so close to a university.
 - b. *Please, please do not rubber stamp this plan. Improve it!*

Proposed Campus Plan of University of District of Columbia

Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A

Comments for the Zoning Commission

By Allison Evans, 3637 Van Ness Street NW, May 25, 2011

Allison Evans
3637 Van Ness Street NW

I appreciate the opportunity to raise my concerns about the proposed construction of dormitories and doubling of enrollment on the University of District of Columbia campus. My house is just up the road from the campus on Van Ness Street.

I am a stay-at-home mother of two young children, and I know of 7 families with young children in my block alone. I share with some of the other families in my neighborhood several concerns relating to the proposed plan to build these buildings, two of which are most critical.

The first concern relates to the increase of cars in the area that will result from the building of these dorms. Parking on my street is already difficult (for all Van Ness residents due to the one-side parking), but mainly because UDC students park on our street while they are in classes. It is often difficult for me to find a parking spot in front of my house. There have been many times that I have had to carry my children (who are sometimes sleeping), and heavy bags to my house from having had to park far up the block.

My second concern relates to the general environment that will be created in the area due to the building of dormitories. I am concerned about my children's exposure to any noise and rowdiness well-known in college dorms. My children and I will be passing the dorms and student center on a regular basis—that is the walking route to the Giant supermarket.

I am also quite concerned about any noise and rowdiness at night when groups of students will inevitably walk up my block to Wisconsin Avenue where there is the only 24-hour eatery in the neighborhood. This is a family-friendly neighborhood and I would appreciate the Zoning Commission's understanding and consideration in helping to preserve the neighborhood we love. Thank you for your time.

Proposed Campus Plan of University of District of Columbia
Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A
Comments for the Zoning Commission
By Andrew Boesel, May 25, 2011

The Campus Plan envisions a 7.5% increase per annum in students at its Van Ness campus, topping out at 5,000 “FTE” (full time equivalent) students in 2020 or 6,500 students using a headcount of part-time students.

Are enrollment assumptions realistic?

UDC enrollment has, as the Campus Plan notes, been declining over the past years. Data from fall 2009 to spring 2010 show a decline in “FTE” enrollment at the Van Ness campus. Enrollment at UDC’s community college, which is not located at Van Ness, increased during the same period.

Purpose of UDC’s community college, which was established in 2009, is in part to serve as a feeder to four-year college programs. It is premature to know how many students will transfer to the Van Ness campus four-year programs or would be admitted to the “Flagship” campus, given its plans to become more selective.

Graduates of the DC Public School System are a prime recruitment source for the University of the District of Columbia. However, the graduation rate for the DC High Schools has remained fairly steady at about 65%, the overall graduation rate for the District as a whole is about 50%, i.e., students are dropping out before they reach high school.¹ While the school system has bolstered its college advising program, it is apparent that schools with a solid record of producing college bound students, Wilson High School and the School without Walls, are not sending their graduates to UDC. It should be pointed that the 2010 Census for the District of Columbia found that the median age is 33.8 years. This is hardly the age cohort that is the focus for a selective admission university. Combine that statistic with the public school graduation rates and you do not have a student recruitment pool for a selective admission public university.

DC residents who graduate from high school have other attractive options to pursue a quality post-secondary education via the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) program. The program provides up to \$10,000 per year to cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition fees at any public university. Many DC students are taking good advantage of this opportunity. (Montgomery College has the largest number, followed by North Carolina A&T, Bowie State and Delaware State.)

DC residents who graduate from high school can also apply to DCTAG for grants up to \$2,500 to attend any private college in Washington, including, among others, American, Catholic, Howard, Georgetown, George Washington, Howard and Trinity.

¹ DC Public Schools Web site.

It should be noted that students from Ward 3, where the University is located, have one of the lowest attendance rates at UDC. Only students from Ward 2 have a lower attendance rate.

While the UDC Master Plan focuses on the physical plant of the University, there is no discussion of the University's plan to bolster its academic resources. There are no plans to expand either faculty or staff. This is for a school that reports a graduation rate of entering students at 10% over a six-year period.

According to the University Fact Book, only 44.6% of all students at the Van Ness campus come from the District of Columbia. With a population of less than 50% DC students, there are several questions that should be addressed:

- Is the University truly serving District residents?
- What are the budget implications if the University fails to attract sufficient students to meet its projections?
- Are District taxpayers expected to subsidize non-DC students?

On-Campus Student Housing

While athletic conferences are only one way of determining comparables, we note that the other members of the NCAA East Coast Athletic conference Division II may provide some examples of enrollment and housing patterns for similar universities. Looking at the other schools that make up the East Coast Conference does not provide any clear pattern of how this diverse group of schools is dealing with the issue of student housing. Some of the schools that comprise the East Coast Conference are clearly situated in what would be classified as suburban or non-metropolitan settings. The New York Institute of Technology, which has the largest enrollment, provides no campus housing. Molloy College is considering dormitory space. Dowling College, with an enrollment total of 7,000, provides 200 dorm spaces.

Absent further clarification from UDC on where it expects a significant increase in DC students to come from, it appears that the decision to build dormitory space at the Van Ness campus for an unknown future student population is premature.

Conclusion

UDC has failed to submit evidence that its expansion will benefit DC residents, who currently provide less than half of the student body at the Van Ness Campus. Academically qualified DC high school graduates choose other universities, and use the TAG program to attend out of state colleges. The Plan fails to provide clear evidence to support the projected need for housing of 600 students.

William Harley
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21 May 2011

The Honorable Anthony Hood, Chairman
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Subject: Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A/
Statement on Van Ness Street Traffic

Dear Chairman Hood:

I would like to address this Commission regarding the planned expansion of the UDC Campus and the accompanying increase in student population. I believe that this action as planned will have a devastating effect on the local neighborhood, especially Van Ness Street between Reno Road and Wisconsin Ave.

I am a retired Marine Colonel, presently employed in the defense industry and have lived on the 3700 block of Van Ness Street for 10 years.

Van Ness Street has a two-lane traffic pattern with parking only on the north side of street. This provides the major east-west bus route, truck route and emergency vehicle route in the immediate area between Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues.

Van Ness has continually taken the brunt of all east-west traffic decisions in the immediate area. Quieting on such streets as Upton have already pushed more traffic over onto Van Ness Street.

Van Ness Street is a common route for Maryland commuters between Massachusetts Ave and Connecticut Ave. Typically these drivers exceed the speed limit, do not observe the four-way stop signs and continually violate the school zone speed restrictions in the 37th Street vicinity. Such traffic is already a menace to the safety and welfare of both pedestrians and especially children on their way to and from the two schools within two blocks of Van Ness (Hearst Elementary and Sidwell Friends). Typical of this traffic flow is the danger of hit-and-run damage to both pedestrians and parked cars – an example of which was the total demolition of my car last summer by a hit-and-run Maryland driver. The movie theater at Upton and Van Ness used to create parking overflow on Van Ness St two to three blocks from Wisconsin Avenue because of inadequate parking near the theater. As such, there is every reason to believe that Van Ness will take the brunt of overflow parking from an enlarged UDC population unless the issue of adequate parking is addressed up front in the planning stages.

The many Embassies west of Connecticut Avenue and the Taiwan Cultural Center at the corner of Van Ness Street and Wisconsin Avenue generate additional parking overflow between Reno Road and Wisconsin Avenue. I have frequently been asked for directions to an Embassy by folks who have parked on Van Ness and are just getting out of their car.

UDC students currently use the limited spaces on Van Ness Street west of Reno Road as overflow parking, which creates problems for residents finding parking spaces. Master bedrooms on Van Ness homes are typically on the street side of the house and subject to noise from non-residents at night. These revelers appear to be younger people from both AU and UDC. I rise before 5 am as I commute to Baltimore and do not do well with late night revelry on the street.

It is for these reasons that I am strongly opposed to the planned expansion of the UDC student population without provisions for increased parking spaces being included in the plan. Our experience to date has made it clear that parking is inadequate or unaffordable for many UDC students, who currently park in front of my home.

We are also strongly opposed to the placement of additional students in other apartments within a mile of campus. If the University rented apartments in the building at the corner of Van Ness and Wisconsin, it would lead to more pedestrian traffic as they walked to campus and back to their apartments, and the noise and revelry would be even greater on weekends.

I recommend that the following provisions included in the planning for an expanded UDC:

1. Increased underground parking for proportionate to any increase in student/faculty population should be included in the new Student Center;
2. One hour parking for non-residents on Van Ness Street between Reno Road and Wisconsin Ave.
3. If dormitories are constructed, they must comply with the Zoning Regulation requirement of 1 parking space for every 5 beds. UDC should not be granted a special exception to this requirement.
4. UDC should explore alternatives to placement of the dormitories on Van Ness Street in order to minimize the impact of several thousand new students on a single family residential area. In particular, placement of the dormitories in Building 52 on Connecticut Avenue, which already has more than 3,000 apartments, would reduce the impact of student housing on our neighborhood.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Commission on this important matter.

Proposed Campus Plan of University of District of Columbia
Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A
Comments for the Zoning Commission
By Millie Groobey, May 25, 2011

To the Members of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission:

My name is Millie Groobey. I live in the 3600 block of Van Ness Street, NW. Before my retirement, I worked in human resources at a law firm and the Kennedy Center. I am speaking on behalf of many of my neighbors on both Van Ness and Veazey Streets.

We are deeply concerned about the very real possibility of greatly increased traffic on Van Ness Street and other streets in the neighborhood that will be caused by the expansion of the University of the District of Columbia ("UDC"). Van Ness Street is an east/ west route from Connecticut Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue. It is classified as a residential collector street, as are Albemarle, Fessenden, and Macomb Streets. The function of a residential collector street is to connect local streets to arterial roads. However, Van Ness is NOT a cross-town arterial (as are Porter Street, Nebraska Avenue, and Military Road), whose function is to carry traffic from one arterial (Wisconsin) to another (Connecticut). Although it is not classified as a cross-town arterial road, it is increasingly burdened with emergency vehicles, automobiles, trucks and buses. This is particularly burdensome because Van Ness Street is a three-lane, not a four-lane, street. It is narrow and crowded. For most houses, the living room and master bedroom are on the street side, so street noise is bothersome to residents.

Assertions in UDC's *Transportation Study* that "impacts from the Campus Plan will be minimal" ignore the realities of real world transportation choices. Students, faculty and staff commute long distances, carry heavy packages, and currently choose to use private automobiles. Increased enrollment will only increase the absolute number of vehicles, despite proposals to encourage use of public transportation.

We are afraid that the large amount of construction being sought by UDC will cause our streets to be used by construction trucks and equipment from early morning until nightfall. We note that UDC's Proposed Campus Plan states that "The University shall direct all construction traffic to avoid routes through the adjacent residential neighborhoods through contract provision or similar mechanisms", but we find that language to be vague at best. We request that the Commission require UDC to spell out in detail exactly how it proposes to manage such construction traffic.

We are also very concerned about the use of the proposed Student Center for special events, particularly those to be held in the evening and on weekends. The possibility of greatly increased vehicular traffic in the neighborhood is a very real one. Again, UDC has stated that it "shall encourage all visitors attending special events on campus to use transit or park in University or other parking facilities". Because we have been told that

the Student Center will be able to accommodate up to 1,000 visitors at any given time if the center is fully utilized, we request that the Commission require UDC to specifically prohibit such visitors from parking their vehicles in the residential areas adjacent to and near UDC, if those vehicles are used to bring visitors to the Student Center. We also request that UDC be required to specify how it will enforce such a requirement.

Thank you very much for your attention. We hope you will incorporate our requests in the final version of the Plan.

Proposed Campus Plan of University of District of Columbia
Zoning Commission Case No. 11-02/ 11-02A
Comments for the Zoning Commission
By Phil Kogan May 25, 2011

Veazey Street Impacts

My name is Phil Kogan and I reside at 3634 Veazey Street NW, less that a quarter mile from the UDC campus. Veazey Street is one block north of Van Ness Street. It runs for 3 blocks between Reno Road and Wisconsin Avenue.

I'm here to express my concerns about the potential impacts of the UDC 2011-2020 Campus Plan on Veazey Street NW.

1. Traffic

Veazey Street is classified as a neighborhood side street. Its primary purpose is to enable residents, visitors, and occasional service and delivery vehicles to travel to and from the homes on the street. Veazey Street also serves as part of the westbound route of the H2 Metrobus.

As traffic volume on Van Ness and surrounding streets has increased in recent years Veazey Street has become a cut through of choice for commuter and commercial traffic including trucks of all sizes. This is not local traffic. These are cars that are weaving through our residential neighborhood to cut around heavily trafficked areas on Wisconsin Avenue, Reno Road, and Van Ness Street. Drivers of these cars are often preoccupied with getting to their destination elsewhere in the city or suburbs. These vehicles often travel too fast on a street inhabited by young children and elderly residents. Conditions are particularly bad during rush hour when haste rules and caution is tossed aside.

When I moved to Veazey Street in the early 1990's traffic was at a tolerable level. More recently cut through traffic has been on the increase and the situation has deteriorated. Our street has a regular flow of traffic during the morning and evening rush hour. The evening flow is particularly heavy.

Veazey Street residents are very concerned that UDC's planned expansion including the proposed Student Center and dormitory as well as population increases has the potential to worsen already bad traffic conditions in the neighborhood and on our street. UDC's transportation study does not adequately address the traffic issue as it impacts the surrounding neighborhood. It is short on data about the number of trips that will be generated over the course of the plan and how this will impact the community around UDC. The UDC transportation study is narrowly focused on transportation impacts at the UDC facility itself and on Connecticut Avenue. But it has no data regarding impacts on surrounding local streets.

The University should be asked to provide information on traffic impacts before the Zoning Commission approves the campus plan.

2. Parking

Veazey Street is a quiet residential street. On weekdays during daytime hours many residents are at work and number of them use their cars to commute. Yet there are often times when parking spaces become scarce. Based on my own observation I believe that UDC students who are commuting to school by car often contribute to this demand.

Just as the traffic problem has intensified in recent years so too has the parking problem. Here again the transportation study has a narrow focus that does not extend beyond the campus itself.

From our view on Veazey Street the UDC campus plan has failed to adequately address neighborhood impacts in the case of both traffic and parking. The Zoning Commission should withhold a decision until these issues are addressed.