

June 13, 2011

Anthony Hood
Chairman
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, Room 210S
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: The University of the District of Columbia Campus Plan and
Student Center Zoning Commission Cases No. 11-02 and 11-02A**

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

At the close of the second and final hearing on the Campus Plan and new Student Center for the University of the District of Columbia ("UDC"), UDC was asked to provide additional information concerning traffic, housing and other issues. The purpose of this submission is to respond to all outstanding issues. Revised plans providing more details about the Student Center are being filed under separate cover.

I. Traffic

Since the hearing on May 25, UDC's traffic expert, Dan VanPelt of Gorove Slade has been in communication with the ANC's traffic expert, David Fields of Nelson\Nygaard. UDC has reviewed in detail each of Fields' suggestions. As set forth in the document attached as Exhibit A, UDC has already incorporated many of measures suggested by Fields into its TMP. Although UDC has given serious consideration to all of the suggestions, certain suggestions have not been adopted. For example, UDC is not willing to consider a morning peak hour trip generation cap. The four main reasons supporting that decision are:

- 1) UDC is not increasing the parking supply on the campus, which is a highly effective way to limit trips to the campus;
- 2) No other university in the District of Columbia has been required to track and limit its morning peak hour trips. This is an onerous condition given UDC's status as the city's only public university;

- 3) UDC is located on one of the most significant arterials in the District of Columbia; the trips generated by UDC represent an extremely small fraction of the peak hour trips on Connecticut Avenue; and
- 4) UDC has agreed to more targeted and effective limits to address potential traffic impacts, such as the restriction on ballroom rentals which cannot begin between 5pm and 7pm on weekdays.

II. Off-Campus Leasing

The Commission requested information about the practice of master leasing by other universities. The matter-of-right use of off-campus apartment houses in high-density residential zones to accommodate student housing demand, including through master leasing, is a recognized part of the housing plan of the major DC universities. Examples of leasing activity include American University, which master leases 200 units in the Berkshire at 4201 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, The Catholic University of America, which leases 40 units in the Cloisters at 100 Michigan Avenue, NE, and The George Washington University which leases the entire building known as City Hall at 950 24th Street NW. As the Commission is aware, universities have also acquired all or partial ownership interests in off-campus apartment buildings for housing as well, and this matter-of-right use has been affirmed by both the Z.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment and the D.C. Court of Appeals.

Commissioner May asked for more information on whether ANC notice was required or provided prior to UDC's leasing of units at Van Ness South. We have been unable to confirm whether the ANC was provided with formal notice of UDC's intent to lease units at Van Ness South 30 days prior to the effective date of the lease. We note, however, that residents of the building, including the ANC representative who lives in the building, were aware of the lease prior to its effective date. At the BZA appeal hearing, the Deputy Chief Building Official for DCRA testified that he had met with the ANC representative and other Van Ness South tenants in "mid-July" to discuss the construction related to UDC's pending use of the units. (BZA Tr. Mar. 15, 2011 at 300). The lease took effect on August 15, 2010. Therefore, the ANC had constructive, if not formal notice, approximately 30 days prior to the effective date of the lease.

As a result of community input and as discussed at the hearing, UDC has agreed to cease any additional master leasing in Van Ness South and to phase out the leasing entirely when the new dormitories are constructed.

III. Students by Ward

We have attached as Exhibit B a table that shows the distribution of students by Ward.

IV. Neighborhood Use of Athletic Facilities

As discussed at the hearing, UDC allows neighborhood use of the newly renovated tennis courts, for an annual charge of \$250. Other universities similarly allow neighborhood use of their facilities, generally for a fee that is much greater than UDC's. For example, George Washington charges \$500 annually for the use of its Mount Vernon Campus pool and tennis courts. Georgetown University charges \$996 annually for the use of the Yates Center, which includes the use of the tennis courts. Nonetheless, UDC understands the need for enhanced availability to the community. **For that reason UDC will agree to offer an hourly rate for the use of the tennis courts and the natatorium for non-university users who do not want to purchase an annual membership.**

V. Massing and Buffering of Proposed Housing

The studies attached as Exhibit C depict three housing options within the proposed Student Housing and Athletic zone. This combined zone was created to address community comments about the need for flexibility in the siting of the proposed dormitories. Also included is an analysis of the four additional sites that were suggested by the Van Ness Residents' Association ("VNRA").

As shown by the studies of the options within the proposed Student Housing and Athletic zone, there will be more flexibility to accommodate UDC's athletic field and to set back and buffer the proposed student housing from Van Ness Street and the International Chancery Center if a building height in excess of four stories is permitted. Nonetheless, UDC is not seeking approval for that additional height at this time and the dormitories referenced in Campus Plan continues to include a four story limit. UDC understands that an acceptable housing proposal will involve a balancing of interests that will occur in connection with the further processing case for the proposed housing.

In addition, while UDC's architects and planners have strongly considered each of the four alternate sites suggested by VNRA, each presents substantial challenges. Many of these options were studied by UDC in connection with the original planning process. These challenges led to the selection of the designated zone. During the course of these hearings, UDC has expanded the originally designated housing zone in response to the concerns of VNRA. That adjustment will provide an opportunity to address VNRA's concerns about setbacks from Van Ness Street.

VI. Conclusion

UDC has proposed a modest plan that will allow for a reasonable level of growth as the University strives to realize its vision. The campus has already experienced enrollment at levels beyond that which is currently being requested. With the addition of a detailed TDM measures, the impact of the additional students will be minimal.

The new University Center will become a central and defining feature on the campus. It will help the University attract new students and better serve their needs. While any change can be challenging for a community, UDC has made every effort to manage potential impacts. We encourage this Commission to endorse UDC's Campus Plan and proposed Student Center.

Sincerely,



Allison C. Prince



David M. Avitabile

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 13, 2011, copies of the attached letter and enclosures were delivered by hand to the following:

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