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Sheila Reid-Cross, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20001

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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Re: The George Washington University Campus Plan
Board of Zoning Application Application No. 16553

Dear Members of the Board:

My purpose in this letter is to address an adjustment currently before the zoning board to enable a proposed (but badly flawed and inadequate) partial solution to a major hospital problem. My discussion in essence relates to the environmental impact of this proposed plan. I refer to the proposed replacement by the George Washington University of its current structure by a new hospital building. Beside being inadequate to the solution of the hospital problem described below, the changes proposed will have a major negative impact on the flow of traffic around Washington Circle and along 24th Street, one of the busiest traffic areas in the city and will have a further negative effect on the historic nature of the neighborhood.

23rd Street serves as a major feed artery for traffic East bound from the Wisconsin Avenue corridor with its large business and office building populations to Constitution Avenue and the Memorial Bridge. Traffic also comes to 23rd Street from north of the Circle up as far as Dupont Circle and from the east along K, L, and M Streets.

There are already major problems with the traffic flow from the Circle southbound onto 23rd Street. The number of lanes from which right turns can be made onto 23rd Street in the east bound direction on the southern side of the circle is inadequate. Drivers East bound around the circle currently (illegally) use three or more lanes from which to turn onto 23rd Street. Only two are allowed legally. In all honesty, though illegal, if this were not done, traffic would become backed up to well beyond the Four Seasons Hotel in the evening rush hour and at other times.

Please note also that when the 24th street bridge is again open, 24th Street, will again serve as a strong feeder of traffic from Virginia Avenue, Route 66 and the GW Parkway north to the Circle and from there west to Georgetown, north to Dupont Circle and east along K, L, M, etc. Streets and Pennsylvania Avenue. This is very heavy northbound in the morning and heavy southbound in the evening and not light at other times of the day. Furthermore, the complicated intersection of 24th and New Hampshire and I Streets handles this traffic along with a heavy pedestrian load

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EXHIBIT NO.112

made up of those moving from the Metro to Georgetown and the neighborhood office buildings.

Thus, any changes which can have a future impact on traffic patterns around Washington Circle must be studied very carefully. I assume this to have been discussed in the University's environmental impact statement.

The present emergency room entrance is east of 23rd Street in a part of the circle area with relatively low traffic. This is particularly true since it is located on Pennsylvania Avenue (as opposed to K Street). Since Pennsylvania Avenue has been closed in front of the White House eastbound traffic along Pennsylvania from Washington Circle has been greatly reduced.

The George Washington University plan would move the emergency room entrance to the area between 23rd Street and New Hampshire Avenue ***which is the absolutely most heavily traveled section of the circle***. In addition to its direct effect on traffic resulting from the movement of ambulances, taxis, and private cars to the entrance, placing this emergency room entrance there will have a major secondary effect on traffic. There can be as many as two or three ambulances parked in front of the entrance at one time together with one or two police cars. This can spill over onto the street as it does in the current location. Imagine these vehicles placed suddenly in an emergency situation when the drivers have to rush inside to accompany someone, leaving cars in one of the lanes that is part of the Circle.

I strongly recommend that you visit the area to see the flow of traffic at various times of the day.

The Foggy Bottom area has been designated an historic area. Buses are prohibited from entering a major part of it. This stems from the narrowness of the streets and the wear and tear on the old structures in the neighborhood when large vehicles like tour busses rumble by. Into this comes a new complication introduced by the plan for the George Washington Hospital. This is the second major flaw in the hospital's design.

The hospital plans to locate the loading platform for the new hospital on 24th Street at I and New Hampshire. This will result in a further major disruption in the aforementioned traffic pattern along 24th Street and will introduce 18 wheeler trucks onto streets that cannot hold them and whose rumblings will damage the old structures. You will thus find trucks maneuvering into driveways and onto streets in neighborhoods whose buildings have been deemed not able to handle vibrations caused by large vehicles.

All this is very badly exacerbated by the fact that the Foggy Bottom Metro is the Metro station for Georgetown, the Kennedy Center, office buildings toward the White House and Office buildings north of Pennsylvania on 23rd to 26th, etc. The substantial foot traffic of people who are seen walking around Washington Circle all day long already make traffic control difficult. The proposed changes in traffic flow are clearly part of a very bad idea.

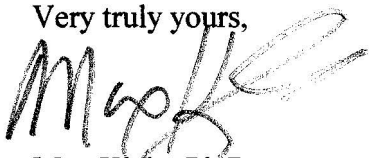
On top of this is a major overriding problem. The city of Washington has serious hospital problems. This needs study, correction and updating in such a way as to address the entire problem. In addition to problems with DC General and Southeast are the problems with the three

hospitals located in Ward 2 (George Washington University Hospital, Georgetown University Hospital, and Columbia Hospital for Women). These are or have been in dire financial straits. One of them is in receivership, a second now 80% owned by a for-profit company (bought at what appears to be a very low price) and a third is hemorrhaging losses. Who is to say that all of the three will survive very far into this millennium. These hospitals are more or less in the same neighborhood and, clearly, the solution to their combined problem requires a study that includes all three sites.

No change in which a diverse community participates can be made without some part of that community being adversely affected. We all realize this. It is up to the zoning board to see to it that the changes which it allows have only a limited adverse effect on the area and certainly to ensure that a large fraction of the community is not adversely affected.

I strongly recommend that you subject this plan to scrutiny at your level of administration and reject this plan as having a major negative effect on the community and as negatively affecting, on a daily basis, the substantial population that uses Washington Circle to and from their homes and offices. Send the plan back for further study and a redesign.

Very truly yours,



Max Klein, Ph.D.
Consultant