GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

OFFICE OF INTERMODAL PLANNING

'00 APR 25 P4:00

Memorandum

TO: Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Administrator

DATE: April 25, 2000

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 16553 – The George Washington University application for a special exception for review and approval of the University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan for a period of ten years.

Upon further review of the applicant's submittal, I am modifying my comments of April 21, 2000 to reflect the following information.

1. Page 10 of the applicant's submittal cites several off-campus properties which the university plans to purchase and convert to housing. If the university follows through on its commitment, an additional 200 student beds would be constructed at the AGC site on Square 122, and an additional 350 beds would be constructed at a property on Square 43. In addition, on Page 11 of the applicant's submittal, they propose to convert existing on-campus graduate and private apartment units to 302 new undergraduate beds.

   These new on and off-campus beds should be added to the 420 proposed on-campus beds mentioned in our April 21, 2000 testimony, for a total of 1,272 new beds for student housing. If these housing commitments are met, the university should achieve its housing goal and Conclusion comment #1 should be deleted.

2. In addition, a review of student travel patterns indicate that 68 percent of the university's students commute by walking. With the additional on and nearby off-campus beds being proposed, we would expect the number of students walking to

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16553
EXHIBIT NO.142

class may increase. Therefore, we retract our conclusion statement #2 to increase student transit use to 50 percent. However, we still recommend that the university further increase non-vehicular travel by students, staff, faculty and visitors.

The Department maintains its recommendations from our April 21, 2000 memorandum to prepare feasibility studies regarding proposed mid-block pedestrian crossings, and further examine traffic and parking impacts of university-owned properties outside of the campus plan area.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

OFFICE OF INTERMODAL PLANNING

Memorandum

TO: Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Administrator

DATE: April 21, 2000

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 16553 – The George Washington University application for a special exception for review and approval of the University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan for a period of ten years.

We have reviewed the Campus Plan for the George Washington University and other supplementary material supplied by the applicant. This report addresses the transportation aspects of the proposal.

The Proposal

The Campus Plan covers the area bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. to the north, 24th Street to the west, F Street to the south and 19th Street to the east. Within the boundaries of the campus, the property owned by the University is devoted to a variety of uses, including but not limited to classrooms, dormitory, library, research, office, support, assembly, athletic and hospital purposes. These uses will be continued in a variety of existing and new buildings.

We note that the Campus Plan does not include an analysis of University owned properties located outside of the Campus Plan boundaries, such as the existing off-campus housing listed as a matter of right: Riverside Tower Hall, the Dakota, Aston and HoVa.

According to the applicant, the proposed Campus Plan (2000-2010) will maintain the enrollment cap of 20,000 students (head count) approved by BZA in the 1985 Campus Plan. Faculty and staff may increase to approximately 1,550 (FTE) and 9, 000 (FTE) respectively, which is the same or lower than the maximum approved in the 1985 Plan. In addition, the Campus Plan recommends an off-street parking inventory in the range of 2,700 to 3,240 parking spaces, an increase of 240 parking spaces over the previous Campus Plan. Key components of the Plan are the following:

- Two on-campus housing sites representing the potential for approximately 420 new beds on campus.

- New construction of approximately 953,000 square feet of gross floor area, which, when combined with the completed and approved projects since the 1985 Plan, represents less total development than approved in the 1985 Plan.

- Maintenance and further development of an open space system and pedestrian network that includes mid-block crossings to improve pedestrian safety.

- Urban design enhancements to identify the campus perimeter.

- An improved Transportation Management Program to minimize campus traffic and impact on neighborhood streets.

The Transportation System

George Washington University, unlike many traditional university campuses, is not located on a site separated from the surrounding communities. The street system within the campus serves university transportation needs, as well as the residential and the commercial communities which abut its boundaries.

The applicant has furnished a detailed description of the local street system and their assessment of transportation impacts of the updated Campus Plan. This description includes the number of lanes, turning movements, functional classification, traffic volume counts and signalized intersection for these streets. In addition, the applicant's transportation assessment includes an accurate description of the public transportation facilities serving the campus and the surrounding area. These facilities include the Foggy Bottom/GWU Metrorail station located on GW campus at 23rd and Eye Streets. Also, several Metrobus stops are conveniently located throughout the campus for the 13M, 80 and L1 buses.

The Impact of the Proposal

Our transportation impact analysis includes the following:

- Efforts to minimize the impact of traffic generated by the University,

- Traffic circulation and level of service,
- Pedestrian mid-block crosswalk, and
- Parking facilities.

Minimizing Traffic Volume and Impacts

The Department believes that one of the best and most effective ways to minimize traffic to and from the campus is to provide on-campus housing for students presently living off-campus. Currently, the University has 3519 beds on-campus and 947 in University owned off-campus buildings for a total of 4466 beds. Student population data provided by the University indicates that there were 6,845 undergraduate students enrolled in 1999. These housing numbers indicate that the University was able to house approximately 65 percent of the undergraduate student body.

The University stated goal is to house 80 percent of its full-time undergraduate students in University owned or controlled residential facilities. Based on current enrollment, the University would need to provide 1,030 beds to meet its stated goal over the ten-year period. However, it appears that only 420 new beds on campus could be in the pipeline.

A second most effective way to decrease traffic volume to and from the campus is to encourage the use of the existing public transportation which is conveniently located throughout the campus. According to a 1999 transportation survey by the University, approximately 50 percent of the faculty and staff arrive each day by public transportation (Metrorail and Metrobus). This is an increase of seven percent compared to the 1985 survey when 43 percent were using public transportation. However, the same survey indicates that only 15 percent of the students are using public transportation. The Department recommends that the University re-examine its existing Transportation Management Plan and seek to increase the use of transit and bicycle by students (and staff and faculty) commuting to and from the campus

The Department supports much of the future Transportation Management Plan as outlined by the University, including the expansion of the shuttle bus service between the Mount Vernon College campus and GW main campus.

Traffic Circulation and Level of Service

The Department had requested that the University make an estimate of the number of trips generated by the university during the typical morning and evening peak hours and to compute capacity and level of services at the critical intersections within the campus. The University has done so. The study indicates the University generates about 1,200 vehicles during the typical morning peak hour and 2,000 during the evening peak hour.

The major morning and evening peak automobile traffic flows occur along the major north and south arterials of the campus namely, 19th, 20th and 23rd Streets. In addition, traffic along the remaining collector streets through the campus is significant because of the location of parking structures and garages.

With respect to capacity and level of service, the applicant has performed a capacity analysis at the intersections of 21st and H Street, 22nd and H Streets and at 23rd and H Streets. The results of the analysis indicate that the key intersections operate at different levels of service during both the A.M. and the P.M. peak hours. The worst congestion will occur at 23rd Street and 'H' Street in the P.M peak hour (Level of Service 'D'). The future level of congestion at 22nd and 'H' in the A.M. peak hour and 21st and 'H' during the P.M. peak hour will be Level of Service 'C'. The level of service at 21st and 'H' in the A.M. peak hour, 22nd and 'H' at the P.M. peak hour, and 23rd and 'H' at the A.M. peak hour will be Level of Service 'B'. The Department concurs with the applicant statement that the University generated vehicles is approximately only 15 percent of traffic passing through the campus area.

Pedestrian Mid-Block Crossing

The University, as a major generator of pedestrian traffic, proposes the implementation of special mid-block crossing at strategic locations throughout the campus. This proposal is a major departure from a previous request to close some streets within the campus to separate pedestrian and vehicular movements, and reduce conflict between the two systems. The Department supports the concept of mid-block crossings provided they will not compromise the safety of pedestrians. In view of the concerns that some of the proposals may eliminate need parking, we recommend that the University prepare a feasibility study for each location for the Department's review and approval.

Parking Facilities

Presently, there are 2,342 off-street parking spaces on the University campus. In addition, the University has the capacity to stack park an additional 247 cars by mean of attendant parking. 150 parking spaces are available for GW use at the Kennedy Center for a total of parking inventory of 2,739 spaces. The level of parking supply is well within the range of 2700-3000 parking spaces set in the 1970 and 1985 Campus Plan.

The updated Campus Plan will add 385 spaces to the current inventory of 2,739 for a total of 3,124 spaces. The transportation study includes some statistics relating to the parking utilization on campus. However, the study and survey falls short of allowing DPW to fully assess the parking demand of the University versus the proposed parking supply. The survey does not indicate how the neighborhood streets in the area are affected by the University generated parking demand, nor the estimated number of University related vehicles parking on residential streets adjacent to the campus. We therefore recommend that the University analyze university-generated parking and traffic impacts in the residential neighborhood to the west and south of the campus, especially

resulting from university-related properties being developed outside of the Campus Plan boundaries, which none-the-less may impact local traffic and parking.

Conclusion

The Department supports most of the proposed Campus Plan changes, as presented. However, we recommend the following revisions to the Campus Plan.

1. Increase on-campus housing supply to meet the 80 percent goal, and further reduce traffic congestion and parking needs.
2. Implement policies to increase student use of transit and bicycles to a minimum of 50 percent of the undergraduate student population. Also seek further increases in employee and faculty use of transit.
3. Prepare feasibility studies for proposed mid-block pedestrian crossings.
4. Examine traffic and parking impacts of University-controlled properties outside of the Campus Plan area on the surrounding residential neighborhood.