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District of Columbia
Chamber of Commerce

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April 20, 2000

Ms. Sheila Reid-Cross, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 – 4th Street, N.W., 2nd Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: The George Washington University Campus Plan
Board of Zoning Adjustment Application No. 16553

Dear Ms. Reid-Cross and Members of the Board:

This letter is to indicate the support of the District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce for George Washington University's Campus Plan (BZA Application No. 16553).

The D.C. Chamber supports and has always advocated on behalf of careful management of the District's neighborhoods, and responsible stewardship of their significant resources. Many of our member businesses are located along the city's neighborhood mainstreets, and dependent on the success of those neighborhoods for their own prosperity.

The Campus Plan which is now before you demonstrates George Washington University's understanding of the importance of maintaining and cultivating its neighborhood environment. The modest scope of the Plan – which calls for substantially less new construction than that approved in the 1985 Plan – ensures that Plan implementation will not impinge on or burden the community in which the University lives. We note proposed open space improvements and landscaping in this Plan, together with an increase in on-campus housing, which will in fact contribute to neighborhood quality-of-life.

The sensitivity of the proposed Plan to its neighborhood should weigh importantly in your evaluation of it. An equally important factor for your deliberations, however, is the benefit which the University's presence provides both to its neighborhood and to Washington, D.C. as a whole.

A study recently completed by Stephen Fuller of George Mason University documents the role played by the University in our city's economy. As shown in that study, in 1999, George Washington University employed 1,360 District residents, and 2,140 students residing in the District. Direct wages paid to District residents totaled $59 million last year. University spending supported an additional 1,552 jobs in the District, reflecting

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Case No. 16553
Exhibit No. 155

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16553
EXHIBIT NO.155

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personal earnings of $61 million. During 1999, 6,266 District-based vendors did $84 million worth of business with the University. Spending in the city by the University's students, visitors, and retirees (excluding GW Hospital) totaled $349 million.

Without beginning to touch on the cultural and other amenities provided to the District by the University's presence, these figures do reflect the contributions it makes as one of the city's prime economic engines.

Board of Zoning Adjustment decisions allocate the use of limited city resources among valuable uses. The George Washington University Campus Plan merits approval based on its sensitive use of its community environment alone. The D.C. Chamber asks that in reviewing the Plan, the Board also remain mindful of the significant contributions the University makes to our city. It is critical to our success as a community that the District house institutions like the University which have both demonstrated themselves to be respectful neighbors and proved themselves to be valuable corporate citizens.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard A. Monteilh
Executive Vice President