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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 10, 2000

Ms. Sheila Cross Reid
Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N. W.
Room 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Case No. 16559 (Field School - Special Exception)

Dear Ms. Reid:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed special exception requested by the Field School at the Cafritz estate on Foxhall Road.

As a twenty-two year resident of this street and of the block where this school wishes to relocate, I can assure you that our street already suffers from severe traffic congestion and vehicular speed. From my desk I watch all the vehicles which depend on this road each day to get to their destinations. I am told that the daily numbers exceed 17,000 and the morning hour when schools open now includes about 1700 vehicles. I have watched this traffic grow and seen first hand what congestion does to people. I have seen this long block barricaded many times due to accidents There is no egress from this almost half-mile block on which the school chooses to locate and the slightest incident causes back-up and results in overflow onto our fragile neighborhood streets. On Foxhall Road itself such incidents bring honking horns and the noisy and polluting idling of diesel engines.

Knowing as we all do that George Washington University/Mount Vernon will be growing to 1500 students by 2010 and that six other schools are located within a half mile or so of this site and that traffic will naturally grow in our ever-popular city, is it truly prudent to invite an eighth institution to our already-congested area? How much can be asked of a neighborhood and a city artery and the many area-wide individuals and businesses that the road serves in order to accomodate a new resident and one that is traffic intensive?"

Our public street system cannot accomodate this additional traffic without adverse impacts on those who live on Foxhall Road, those who use Foxhall Road and and those who live on Foxhall's neighborhood side streets.

Vehicular and pedestrian safety issues also concern me. Field has chosen a site on a high volume, high speed commuter artery that is only 22 feet wide, narrower than most city side streets, on a dangerous and steep bend with limited sight lines. The site is not on the corner and has no access from alternative streets nor is public transportation readily accessible. Parkland within a block of both sides of Foxhall, formerly called Ridge Road, limits the school's accessibility as well. The multiple turnings and turnarounds that vehicles must do to access this property proves that it does not work. It puts more people at risk particularly during rush hours.

BZA
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Exhibit No. 76

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EXHIBIT NO.76

Even for me living all these years on Foxhall I still hold my breath everytime I access this road. My children when high school age were never allowed to enter the road from our driveway. One of the fatalities this road has experienced, the highschooler driving to school with her younger brother ten years ago occurred in front of my house. So many neighbors have spoken to me about the dangers of this road and many prohibit their children from driving on it.

Foxhall is also not a pedestrian friendly street due to the almost non existent sidewalks and the narrowness of the road. While the school plans an internal sidewalk on its property and a new sidewalk is planned on Foxhall across from Mount Vernon, students who choose to walk still have to deal with an extremely dangerous Foxhall crossing and a neighborhood without sidewalks. The one traffic officer the school is proposing at one of the school's two entrances will have to watch out for his/her own safety and monitor crossings at W and Whitehaven as well. Whitehaven, the only street crossing with a traffic light (as neighbors do not want one at W Street) will be dangerous as it serves St. Patrick's, Mount Vernon and eastbound Field School traffic.

This site puts at risk those who drive on Foxhall and those who are trying to enter the school by foot or vehicle.

And our residential neighborhood and parkland setting? The GWU/Mount Vernon agreement specifically protected W Street from further impacts -- moving the college's entrance to Whitehaven. W has always served as the boundary for the truly residential area to its north. This school's traffic plan tests the integrity of this neighborhood as does the location of a school in a quiet residential neighborhood. As none of our neighborhood streets have sidewalks, neighbors who enjoy our lovely sidestreets and our very special woodland parks with their dogs and children are put more at risk.

The traffic and school location adversely affect the integrity of our residential neighborhood and the safety of our neighborhood streets.

For these above-stated reasons I urge rejection of this application.

Sincerely,

Dorothy M. Woodcock

cc: Katherine Patterson
Council of the District of Columbia
441 Fourth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001