BZA Application No. 16566
Georgetown University 2000-2010 Campus Plan
Community Response – July 18, 2000

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Peter Pulsifer, ANC 2E 03 and Burleith Citizens Association

Overview of Community Position

1. Identification and qualifications.

2. Critique of ANC 2E majority opinion

3. Importance of strong neighborhoods to the city (and to the university).

4. Strong neighborhoods are not inconsistent with a strong university. The community supports Georgetown University, although we oppose elements of the proposed plan.

5. Bases for community objection:

   - Universities in the District of Columbia must operate so that they are not objectionable to neighboring property because of "noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions". Georgetown University has failed this test.

     The proposed plan, while in many ways an improvement over the present plan:

     (a) Fails to address existing impacts;
     (b) Creates additional problems.

   - Ongoing problems with the planning process for Georgetown University underscore how unrealistic a ten-year time frame is

     (a) History: failure of present plan to guide development
     (b) Significant changes in University administration in next two years
     (c) Major development projects underway (Canal Road, Southwest Quadrangle)
     (d) Change in Medical Center operations (MedStar)
     (e) Nearby community development affects traffic impact (Design Center West, Eagle Liquor projects on M Street at Key Bridge)

6. Overview: Principal Community Concerns

   - Strongest neighborhood opposition to proposed enrollment increases

     (a) Undergraduate students, with or without on-campus housing
     (b) Reasonable limits on graduate students increase

BZA
Case No. 16566
Exhibit No. 69

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16566
EXHIBIT NO.69

- Traffic impact, present and future

  (a) Fragmented and outdated traffic measurements at present: no capability for remediation
  (b) Reservoir Road (Medical center)
  (c) Special events in new facilities (athletics, theater)
  (d) Traffic flow into and on campus (Reservoir Road, Entrance 1, Canal Road)

- University off-campus operations in the community should be known

- Medical Center operations under MedStar

  (a) Higher intensity uses may be inconsistent with a teaching hospital

- New high-density development on campus

  (a) New construction on north (Reservoir Road) campus changes character there
  (b) Mid-campus development significantly reduces open space

- Flaws in the plan and planning process

  (a) Description of current and future use in four categories is inadequate
  (b) Proposed plan lacks important information
  (c) University has been unresponsive in plan process to community concerns

- Other concerns (including noise from university-sponsored and university-sanctioned events).

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Patricia Scolaro, President, Burleith Citizens Association and Bonnie Hardy, Past President

INTRODUCTION

Patricia Scolaro, President of the Burleith Citizens Association and Bonnie Hardy, Past-President of the Burleith Citizens Association represent Burleith - a community of 550 homes directly across Reservoir Road from Georgetown University. It is bounded on the north by Whitehaven Parkway; on the east by 35th Street; on the west by 39th Street; and on the south by Reservoir Road.

The Burleith Citizens Association is opposed to:

- Any increase in undergraduate enrollment;,
- The alignment of 38th Street with Reservoir Road Entrance #1 to the university, and
- The use of only four categories to identify land and building use on campus.

PRINCIPAL COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

1. An enrollment increase with excess students living in the community creates objectionable conditions to the neighboring properties.

   - Behavior issues
   - Overcrowding and inappropriate use of single-family housing.
   - Traffic and parking issues.

2. Role of the Office of Off-Campus Affairs:

   - Even with efforts under current plan, problems exist.
   - Need for specifics in the proposed plan.

3. Land use categories - description of proposed use of four land use categories is inadequate.

CONCLUSION

University operations have caused serious disruptions to the neighboring properties because of the noise, traffic, number of students, and other objectionable conditions.

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Barbara Downs, President, Citizens Association of Georgetown, and Douglas Rixey, Member

INTRODUCTION

The Citizens Association of Georgetown is one of the oldest civic groups in the District of Columbia. CAG represents over 1100 resident members in east and west Georgetown.

BACKGROUND

CAG's witnesses will be Barbara Downs, President of CAG, and Douglas Rixey, member and CAG representative to the Georgetown University planning process. Barbara Downs is in her third term as President of CAG, has lived in Georgetown since 1965, and is a founding board member of the Friends of Volta Park.

Douglas Rixey is a registered architect in the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland, and has practiced in Georgetown for fifteen years.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Testimony will focus on the adverse impact of Georgetown University on the community including: traffic generated by on and off-campus development, the projected parking deficit on-campus, group housing on and off-campus, and other "east campus" concerns.

CONCLUSION

Georgetown University currently has an unacceptable adverse impact on the community. The proposed plan will only increase those impacts and should not be approved. The unified community position that includes a shorter life for the plan, no undergraduate enrollment increase, a cap of 200 additional graduate students, restrictions on further construction, and development of stringent traffic studies and impact assessment standards, should be endorsed by the BZA.

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Charles R. Braun, Hillandale Homeowners Association.
and Joseph Cutro, P.E.

INTRODUCTION

The Hillandale Homeowners Association (HOA) represents the residents of about 270 single-family homes in the Hillandale planned unit development north of Georgetown University's north campus.

BACKGROUND

Hillandale HOA's witnesses will be its representative in this hearing, Charles R. Braun, and the Hillandale HOA's traffic consultant, Joseph Cutro, P.E. Mr. Braun is a D.C. attorney now residing in Hillandale who formerly was a member and chairman of ANC 3F (Forest Hills and North Cleveland Park).

Mr. Cutro is a professional engineer specializing in traffic and transportation issues. His experience includes performing traffic impact studies, reviewing developer traffic impact studies for the City of Rockville, and drafting the City of Rockville's rules for performing traffic impact studies..

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Testimony will focus on:

- The effect of MedStar's proposed acquisition of facilities and development rights on Georgetown University's north campus on traffic on Reservoir Road; and
- Noise and safety concerns resulting from MedStar's proposed increased use of a "helipad" on the campus.

CONCLUSION

Georgetown University has failed to meet its burden of proving that its proposed campus plan is unlikely to affect neighboring properties in Hillandale adversely because of increased traffic, noise, and other objectionable conditions.

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Robert Andrew, President, Foxhall Community Citizens Association, and Scott Polk, Past President

INTRODUCTION

Foxhall Community Citizens Association (FCCA) was founded in 1928 and represents around 875 homes in the area west of GU bounded by Whitehaven Parkway, Glover-Archbold Park, and Canal Road.

BACKGROUND

Robert Andrew is a Professional Engineer whose career includes a period on the faculty of the University of Auckland, New Zealand where he had responsibilities for modernizing curriculum for the School of Engineering and a five-year computing plan campus-wide.

Scott Polk is a licensed Realtor who specializes in residences in the Foxhall area and whose offices are in Georgetown. He is also the ANC2E Commissioner for the Foxhall Village area.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Testimony will focus on impact of increasing graduate students, on increased parking pressures in residential neighborhoods, and upon threatened open space from GU expansion.

Testimony will also summarize GU south campus traffic issues and the lack of baseline traffic assessments in the area around GU campus.

CONCLUSION

Given the lack of certainty in GU's projections of graduate student programs and the unknown balance between on-site vs. telecommuting, BZA should adopt a shorter-lived campus plan with cap of 200 increase.

Given the lack of baseline traffic data and several years of traffic pattern disruption with construction projects by GU, DPW and nearby businesses, BZA should require GU to collect annual baseline traffic data in preparation for the next campus plan.

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Stephen Hopkins, President, Cloisters in Georgetown Homeowners Association

INTRODUCTION

Cloisters in Georgetown Homeowners Association (Cloisters) is an involved corporate body representing the owners of 33 properties at the corner of Reservoir Road and 35th Street. Stephen Hopkins recently retired from his responsibilities representing Citicorp in Washington; he is deeply involved in the activities of Georgetown Presbyterian Church.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The change in operations of the north campus will have profound impacts on the communities that abut the Georgetown University campus. Among the protections that must be afforded are:

- Regularizing the zoning involved in operation of the hospital by a non-university entity.
- Limiting disproportionate trauma caseloads, which bring particularly high levels of activity.
- Limiting the number of physicians' office buildings, as well as their size and intensity of use
- Limiting the commercial operations on the north campus
- Maintaining the cap on parking spaces on campus
- Limiting the bulk of proposed garages on Reservoir Road and the Cloisters community.

All of these protections are in addition to limitign the size of the undergraduate and graduate student enrollment.

CONCLUSION

Protecting residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts of non-residential use, in keeping with § 1100.7 and 1104.1 of the Comprehensive Plan, requires careful and articulated language in the BZA order that accompanies any change in the campus plan for Georgetown University. In light of the number and significance of the changes being proposed for the campus, a ten-year plan offers only risk to adjacent communities that are already negatively impacted by this intense use of land in a residential community.

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Barbara Zartman, ANC 2E 04

Closing Statement

BACKGROUND

Barbara Zartman is the former President of Cloisters in Georgetown Association, an officer of the Georgetown Residents Alliance, and served for three years as President of the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District of Columbia. An elected ANC commissioner in 2E, she has chaired the Historic Preservation, Planning and Zoning Committee for that body, and she is a Trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. She previously served as the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps of the United States, a Senate-confirmed Presidential appointment, and is the author of several studies on urban affairs published by The Conference Board.

INTRODUCTION

- The Zoning Regulations as a contract between residents and their government

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

- Georgetown University has adversely affected the residential community in which it is situated over the life of the existing campus plan.
- Georgetown University has failed to meet its burden of proving that the elements of the proposed plan will not be further objectionable because of increased student levels, traffic, noise, or other conditions.

CONCLUSION

- The ten-year plan presented to the Board must be rejected.
- There is a strong case for a five-year plan.
- BZA protections that must specifically be included regarding:

  Enrollment and housing
  Parking and traffic
  Medical center and north campus operations
  New south campus facilities
  Off-campus facilities
  Community liaison process
  Procedure for objective evaluation of university impact.