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October 3, 2002

Chairperson Carol J. Mitten, MAI
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
One Judiciary Square, Suite 210
441 Fourth Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20001

Re: Square 37, Case 00-27M

Dear Zoning Commissioners,

My firm, Gorove/Slade Associates, Inc. has been retained by the Circle Management Company to provide consulting regarding traffic engineering matters associated with their property located in the north portion of Square 37 at 22nd and "M" Streets in the West End. We are extremely familiar with the West End having carried out numerous assignments for various clients over the last decade including our traffic studies for the Millenium PUD (Ritz Carlton), which is one square east of Square 37. Also, I have reviewed the draft "Square 37 Rezoning Traffic Impact Study" published by DDOT, dated May 2002. I provided advice to the DDOT consultant on some of the recommendations in that draft study.

Our studies over the years have consistently shown that the predominant cause of congestion in the West End is commuter traffic that is traveling east - west between downtown Washington, DC and the western portion of the city, Northern Virginia, and the Maryland suburbs. While the West End has moderate to high densities of development, the high amount of residential property, hotels, and institutional uses do not generate high peaks of automobile traffic like the downtown office development does. For example, in the special study we did of George Washington University, the university generates only 15% of the traffic on the streets in the immediate University area. The remaining 85% is traffic passing through the university area; for example, on 23rd Street, for every seven cars that pass by, only one is generated at the University and the other six are passing through the area.

We studied the congestion and operational problems that are cited in the "Square 37 Rezoning Traffic Impact Study." Our studies were conducted a few years ago on behalf of another client but they are relevant to the Square 37 rezoning. During the evening commuter peak period, there is a heavy traffic demand westbound on M Street to southbound on 23rd Street to Washington Circle to the ramp to K Street. That traffic continues then to either Interstate 66 or the Whitehurst Freeway.

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Exhibit 46

ZONING COMMISSION
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EXHIBIT NO.46

The congestion that we all observe and is cited in the "Square 37 Rezoning Traffic Impact Study" that occurs on M Street, 23rd Street and in the Circle along this route is due to: (1) the amount of traffic using Washington Circle is too great for the unsignalized traffic control, (2) the illegal parking on the on ramp to K Street restricts the capacity of that ramp, and (3) the operations of the traffic signal at K Street and 27th can be made more efficient. These three causes of congestion are bottlenecks, which create long delays along this route. This subsequently causes spillover of this traffic pattern onto 24th Street from M Street and 24th Street is not designed to handle this level of traffic demand.

The solution that we developed and discussed with DDOT several years ago is to control traffic movements through Washington Circle with traffic signals rather than with merging and weaving traffic movements, to remove the illegal parking on the ramp to K Street at all times, and to re-stripe the lanes and modify the signal operations at K Street and 27th Street. DDOT has agreed that these are the right improvements to be made. DDOT simply has not been able to make this a priority for allocation of its limited funds.

With regard to the rezoning of Square 37, the differences in traffic generation characteristics between the various alternatives that are being considered are categorically insignificant relative to the dominant commuter traffic patterns in the West End. Solutions like the one I have cited above, and others cited in the "Square 37 Rezoning Traffic Impact Study would significantly reduce the congestion that is caused by commuter through traffic. Development densities and mixes that are currently being considered for Square 37 should not be restricted for traffic reasons.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Slade, P.E.
Vice-President

Cc: Arthur Jackson, DCOP
Michelle Pourciau, DDOT