GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director
Office of Zoning

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Associate Director for Transportation Planning

DATE: March 10, 2003

SUBJECT: **Zoning Commission Case No. 02-20 Supplemental Report**
Catholic University of America (CUA) Master Campus Plan - Proposed Redesign and Partial Closing of John McCormack Road, NE

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The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the subject application and supplemental material for the above site and does not support the proposed partial closing and redesign of John McCormack Road, NE to incorporate a cul-de-sac. This memorandum addresses the transportation aspects of the proposal.

Background

The applicant, the Catholic University of America, proposes roadway reconfiguration on John McCormack Road, NE as part of updating the CUA Master Campus Plan. The applicant proposes a partial closing of the subject roadway between Michigan Avenue, NE and a CUA driveway entrance located 100' to the north for all vehicular traffic, except for emergency uses. The short segment of roadway currently carries one-way traffic northbound and two-way traffic begins north of the CUA driveway entrance. John McCormack Road, NE is a public roadway designated as a collector street.

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Case 02-20
Exhibit 65

The benefit of the proposal cited by the University is the elimination of the existing pedestrian/vehicular conflicts as well as prohibiting trash trucks presumably using the campus roadways to access the signalized intersection of Michigan Avenue and 7th Street, NE.

Truck Impacts

To support the proposed improvements the University provided traffic counts for trash trucks entering John McCormack Road from Michigan Avenue to access the District

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Department of Public Works' (DPW) Fort Totten Solid Waste Transfer Station located at Bates and John McCormack Roads, NE. Truck traffic counts were performed in September 2001 and February 2003 between 7:00 – 9:00 AM and 4:00 – 6:00 PM. The total number of AM trips during September 2001 was 11 trucks and total number of PM trips was three trucks. In February 2003 the number was significantly reduced with only one AM trip and no PM trips observed. In response to complaints lodged by the University, DPW issued a memorandum to all contractors that the segment of John McCormack Road between Michigan Avenue and Taylor Street is restricted for all trucks accessing the facility. The decline in truck traffic is apparently due to the compliance of contractors to DPW restrictions.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Safety

The Study states, "The safety of pedestrian movements between the campus and the adjacent Metrorail Station would be enhanced significantly." Currently, a crosswalk is provided across John McCormack Road, NE linking the CUA campus with the Brookland CUA Metro Station pedestrian entrance. The proposed cul-de-sac would eliminate vehicle access for this segment of roadway and eliminate potential pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, with the exception of emergency vehicles.

DDOT staff obtained a Three-Year Accident Incident Report for the intersection of John McCormack Road and Michigan Avenue, NE. No crashes were reported between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 2002. Additional options for safety improvements were not listed in the report and may include the installation of regulatory signage warning drivers of high pedestrian activity, re-striping the existing crosswalk, or proposing a stop or yield sign.

The revised campus circulation proposal, with the proposed cul-de-sac, would force inbound traffic from the south to be shifted to the entrances located at the intersections of 7th Street, 4th Street, and Michigan Avenue and Harewood Road, and Michigan Avenue, NE. Both intersections link to the only through-campus drive, which is shared with the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The intersection of 4th Street, Harewood Road and Michigan Avenue, NE, is operating above capacity during both AM and PM peak hours. Any increase to traffic volumes at this intersection will further exacerbate the level of congestion in the area.

Vehicular Impacts

The Traffic Study states that existing vehicles accessing the campus from the south at the intersection of Michigan Avenue, NE and John McCormack Road, NE will be redistributed to the north at the intersection of Taylor Street and John McCormack Road, NE in the future; however, data provided does not identify the potential impact on the local transportation network and nearby intersections as a result of the redirected traffic.

The Study fails to provide information on the usage of the subject section of roadway for the general public, including residents and users of the Metro Station. John McCormack Road, NE provides a northbound route linking Michigan Avenue, NE to Taylor Street, NE, near the intersection of Hawaii Avenue, NE for residents and visitors of the Pleasant Hills and University Heights communities located along both corridors.

The proposed partial closing of John McCormack Road, NE would redirect existing northbound local traffic to the west at the intersection of 4th Street, Harewood Road and Michigan Avenue, NE, or to the east with 10th Street, NE serving as the closest north-south route. The intersection of 4th Street, Harewood Road and Michigan Avenue, NE, as stated above, operates at a current level of service below District planning standards. Tenth Street, NE is a local road that traverses a residential community. As stated above, the traffic study provided does not provide existing or proposed vehicle volumes for local or campus related trips using John McCormack Road, NE, or the potential impact on local roads.

Conclusion

The proposed construction of a cul-de-sac on John McCormack Road, NE will have an adverse impact on existing traffic conditions, restrict vehicular access to the campus, increase vehicular volume on neighboring streets, and restrict the local community access to a public roadway. Accordingly, DDOT does not support the proposal.