



Testimony before the Zoning Commission regarding

Case No 06-09 – Howard University – Interim Off-Campus Use – Parking Lot
Position OPPOSE the special exception

April 27, 2006

Greetings Chairman Mitten and commissioners My name is Cheryl Cort, I live at 1438 Florida Ave , NW I am the chair of the Cardozo Shaw Neighborhood Association's (CSNA) Transportation and Parking Committee CSNA had designated me to speak on its behalf in this matter

We request party status regarding Case No 06-09 – Howard University – Interim Off-Campus Use – Parking Lot We also wish to request a waiver in the case of our late filing due to our incomplete filing at the 14 day advance deadline We were informed today that our original filing was incomplete I promise CSNA will do better next time

The application before you, to build a surface parking lot as an interim use by Howard University is of significant interest to our neighborhood The subject property is entirely within CSNA's boundaries The Boundaries of CSNA in Northwest, Washington, D.C are 16th Street to the West, 8th Street to the East, "S" Street to the South and, Barry Place to Florida Avenue to W Street to the North This application significantly impacts the members of our association and our neighborhood

Simply put, another surface parking lot harms the historic character, safety and walkability of our neighborhood, and its use –a 23-space spaces for faculty, seems to not be a compelling one. Surely if Howard has a specific need to provide 23 parking spaces for faculty, it could find them on its campus, rather than 2 or 3 blocks away from campus It seems that there are many alternatives to meet any transportation needs that the University might have for its employees A surface parking lot at this location is an inappropriate and harmful use, even for an interim period.

I ask that the Commission deny the applicant's request on the grounds that the harm done by the surface parking lot use in our neighborhood is not justified by any benefit to the applicant. Many alternatives are available to address the applicant's needs which it claims are addressed by this proposed special exception use

Howard proposes to operate a 23-space surface parking lot for approximately five years or more as an interim use on a parcel designated for medium density A 100-year old building, with a store on the first floor stood at the corner of Florida Ave , Barry Place and Sherman Ave until it was knocked down a month or two ago I am also concerned that the portion of the site that was operating as a parking lot was out of compliance with zoning regulations I ask that the legitimacy of the extant parking lot adjacent to the now torn-down corner building be reviewed before any affirmative action is taken on this application /

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To request time on the agenda or for other business contact CSNA at
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ZONING COMMISSION
CASE No. 06-09
EXHIBIT No. 27
District of Columbia
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When I asked a representative of the applicant at the April 6 ANC 1B meeting for the justification for the special exception for a surface parking lot, the representative responded that the parking lot will address neighbors' complaints about Howard students parking in front of their houses. This explanation is inconsistent with the application which states that the lot will "primarily serve faculty members and potentially some students." So how is a *faculty* parking lot going to fulfill the cited need for *student* parking as a response to community complaints?

There is no evidence that daytime parking conflicts are occurring in this area. None of the residential blocks adjacent to the applicant's site are designated as Residential Permit Parking (RPP) zones. No part of the property in question nor adjacent nearby commercially-zoned properties' curbspace is managed with parking time limits or meters. If neighbors are concerned about excluding Howard commuters, they can petition to designate their streets for RPP. I and CSNA are happy to assist neighbors in doing this, but I'm not aware of a desire to do so. Likewise, we can request DDOT to assess if time limits or meters are needed in the area.

Given the applicant's contradictory justification, and the easy alternative of instituting Residential Parking Permit zones, parking time limits or meters for the area to address any residents' concerns about commuters parking on neighborhood streets (such as Florida Ave and 10th St, NW), I do not believe that the applicant has any justification for a 23-space parking lot at this location. A surface parking lot in the neighborhood will, however, do significant harm to the neighborhood through creation of an auto-dominated landscape, degraded pedestrian environment, undefined corner of three streets. The unintended use of a site that should be a medium density mixed use building creates more dead space with fewer eyes on the street, and gives pedestrians a feeling of less security from traffic and crime.

To address Howard University's need to provide good access for its employees, students and visitors, and reduce the negative impacts of existing or proposed Howard surface parking lots in our neighborhood, I recommend that Howard University develop a Transportation Management Plan. This can be done with the assistance of the Council of Governments Commuter Connections Program which offers this service for free to employers (see attachment). The plan helps employers devise a set of strategies that maximize transit, walk, bike, and carpooling access, and more effectively manage parking resources. All this benefits students, employees, visitors and residents with better transportation choices, less traffic, a more pedestrian-friendly street environment, and stronger transit ridership.

In sum, I recommend the following solutions to address Howard's need for employee, visitor and student access, while avoiding harm to the neighborhood where the applicant's property is located

- 1 Deny the surface parking lot special exception Require the planting of grass and plant materials that control stormwater runoff as a temporary use until an appropriately-scaled building can be built
- 2 Request or require the University to prepare a Transportation Management Plan with the goal to minimize commuter vehicle trips to the site and area, minimize parking demand, and maximize alternative access including transit, walking, bicycling, carsharing, and carpooling This should certainly be a requirement if Howard is granted any exceptions to maintain surface parking lots in the neighborhood
- 3 Require that the charge to park in a Howard parking lot be higher than the average trip cost to commute by transit to the site (Average trip cost will be obtained when Howard conducts a travel demand survey of its workers, students and visitors, as part of preparation of a Transportation Management Plan)
- 4 And beyond the likely scope of the Zoning Commission, we suggest that DDOT and residents work to manage on-street parking if there are conflicts between residents and University-related activities We suggest that RPP zoned parking be instituted on blocks within 2 blocks of the applicant's property if needed CSNA can assist neighbors in securing RPP zoning for curbspace to exclude commuters from parking in front of their houses if they wish We can also work with DDOT to add parking time limits or meters in front of commercially-zoned parcels if there is justification

Thank you for your consideration

See Commuter Connections at
<http://www.mwcog.org/commuter/Bdy-empsvcs-services.html>

From website

Commuter Connections local Employer Services representatives can provide helpful services to your company **free** of charge.

- Development of tax-free commute benefit programs (SmartBenefits, Metrochek, discounted carpool/vanpool parking, etc.)
- On-site transportation assessments
- Confidential employee commute surveys
- Mapping of employee residence patterns
- Computerized ridematching for carpools and vanpools
- Corporate relocation assistance
- On-site rideshare promotions and displays
- Assistance with developing and implementing alternative commute programs and incentives
- Commuter program coordination with nearby companies
- Training an on-site transportation manager
- Work schedule alternatives development
- Program follow-up and support
- Transit schedules and route maps
- New employee commute options information
- Evaluation of parking situation and development of parking management strategies
- Development of a telework (telecommute) program
- Guaranteed Ride Home program registration and information
- Ozone Action Days program development