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Carol Mitten, Chairman
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South
Washington DC 20001

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE No. 06-~~11~~ 19
EXHIBIT No. 38

Re GW Campus Plan Cases #06-11, #06-12 and #06-19

Dear Ms Mitten and Zoning Commission Members

My husband and I write in support of the George Washington University Proposed Campus Plan. This letter lists the primary reasons we both believe this plan is in the best interests of our historic neighborhood (Foggy Bottom), the city, and the University. But first, let me say that we are city dwellers. We love this neighborhood because it is a city – as opposed to a suburban-like – neighborhood. And while we have not always agreed with our neighbor the University, we feel that Foggy Bottom is a more dynamic city neighborhood because the University is in our midst.

We believe the plan allows the University to become a better neighbor while adding significantly to our city. As briefly as possible, here are our reasons for saying so:

1. We have actively participated in as many of the open, facilitated meetings as possible during the development of the plan and we have seen our recommendations, concerns and enthusiasms reflected in the University's plan. We applaud the use of an independent facilitator and the involvement of the University's and the city's planners in meaningful dialogue. We believe the process was honest, valid and has demonstrated results.
2. "Grow Up, Not Out" is the right answer to the neighborhood's concern that George Washington University is spilling outside its boundaries. As much as we love the University, we also love the high-rises like our own, the institutions such as the Kennedy Center, the quirky mews and the old row houses. We want this neighborhood preserved in its architectural richness and diversity. "Grow Up, Not Out" contains the student exuberance within the campus boundaries, helps create a world class institution in the city we love, and preserves the diversity of our neighborhood.
3. The historic preservation plan encompassed in the campus plan is critical to our support. We strongly support the creation of a University historic district and the designation of historic structures. We also applaud the University's partnership with the School Without Walls, both physical and academic. We know the University to be a good neighbor across the city through our other volunteer and work efforts.

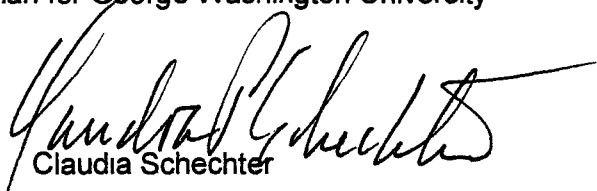
- 4 George Washington University has demonstrated its commitment by making the promised changes in housing for this school year that grew out of the planning forums. We agree that the University may not have always heard Foggy Bottom concerns, but they have demonstrated good faith in hearing them now and abiding by the commitments they have made.
- 5 We are also fans of the University's proposal for Square 54, provided that there is a significant commitment to moderate income housing within its residential core. When we first moved to this neighborhood in 1993, we were surprised by the lack of retail and restaurant services. The University has improved that with small retail and eating options within dorms and other campus buildings. But we need a shopping area that can support the very significant number of new residences between us and the West End. We have raised with the University the hope that improvements to the Foggy Bottom metro station, the fourth busiest in the system, can be part of Square 54. These should begin with a canopy, and if possible include a tunnel under 23rd Street. As an aside, we both work with nonprofit institutions. Earned revenue is essential to financial stability and security for any nonprofit today.
- 6 We have been quite vocal in meetings with the University about the need to preserve and expand green space, the tree canopy, and effective Bay-friendly pavements and plantings. We have spoken to University officials and planners at the public forums about these elements of the Streetscape Plan. Overall Foggy Bottom and the West End have lost important green canopy and space as the planned unit developments tear out the trees and replace them with small bench-type plantings that provide one tenth the cover. Please insure strong requirements for this element of the overall plan.

As residents in a small and beautiful urban neighborhood, we want that neighborhood protected. For the reasons above, we believe the University's proposed campus plan does so. But as residents of a great city, the District of Columbia, we want to see the city continue to thrive. Higher education is a primary employer in this city and one we are quite happy to claim, having lived earlier in areas more characterized by distribution, office that died at 5 p.m., and light industrial uses. George Washington University has increased its national stature many fold over the past 20 years. We hope it does become a world-class university, for the sake of our city. We are willing to live as that University's neighbor, provided that the University adheres to the proposed plan. It has the right balance to achieve both goals. The commitment to an independent audit of enrollment by the University demonstrates that appropriate enforcement mechanisms exist and we hope they will be built into the plan.

We thank you for allowing us to provide our thoughts in this letter and hope that the Zoning Commission will approve the proposed campus plan for George Washington University.

Sincerely,


Bill Schechter


Claudia Schechter