

**BEFORE THE ZONING COMMISSION
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Application of Georgetown University

**Z.C. Case No. 16-18H
ANC 2E & ANC 3D**

I. Summary of Requested Action

This is an application (“**Application**”) of Georgetown University (“**Georgetown**” or the “**University**”) for review and approval of an amendment to and further processing of the Hilltop Campus Plan to authorize the construction of field lighting for Shaw Field.

The University submits the Application pursuant to Subtitle X § 101.1 of Title 11, District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (“**Zoning Regulations**”). Pursuant to Subtitle X § 101.16, the amendments and further processing applications may be considered simultaneously.

II. Site Location and Context

The Hilltop Campus¹ is bounded by Reservoir Road NW on the north, Glover-Archbold Park on the west, Canal Road NW on the south, and 35th Street NW on the east. The Hilltop Campus is located between the Georgetown, Burleith, Hillandale, and Foxhall neighborhoods of Northwest DC in Wards 2 and 3 and is comprised of approximately 104 acres of land area. The Hilltop Campus is located in the Institutional and Moderate Density Residential land use categories on the Future Land Use Map. It is located in the R-3, R-20, and MU-3 Zone Districts. University use in the R-3 and R-20 zones requires special exception approval pursuant to the campus plan provisions of the Zoning Regulations.

Shaw Field is a natural grass athletic field located in the northwest quadrant of the Hilltop Campus. To the south is Kehoe Field, an artificial turf field that is used for recreational and intramural activities. Both Shaw Field and Kehoe Field sit atop Yates Field House, the University’s fitness and wellness center. To the east of Shaw Field is the Leavey Center, the University’s student center. Portions of the Medical Center and MedStar Georgetown University Hospital are located to the north of the field, and the former hospital helipad is located to its west. Further to the west, approximately 200-300 feet from the western edge of Shaw Field, is Glover Archbold Park.

III. Description of the Project

Since 1996, Shaw Field has been and continues to be used by the University’s NCAA Division I nationally-ranked men’s and women’s soccer programs for practices and games. Shaw

¹ Consistent with an amendment proposed in Z.C. Case No. 16-18G, this Application uses the term “Hilltop Campus” to refer to what is the “Main Campus” in the current Campus Plan.

Field has a seating capacity of 1,625 and is improved with seating, a scoreboard, and team shelters. Unlike Kehoe Field and Cooper Field (the University's field for football, field hockey, and men's and women's lacrosse), Shaw Field is not lit and cannot be used for evening practices and games. Accordingly, pursuant to this Application, the University seeks approval to add field lighting to Shaw Field, which will provide greater flexibility in scheduling practices and games to accommodate student academic schedules, coordinate with other schools, and increase the University's flexibility to host postseason games.

As shown on the plans attached as Exhibit G ("**Plans**"), the University proposes a total of six 80-foot tall poles with field lights that are designed as required to meet the NCAA's standards for illumination of both the field surface and the athletes ("**Project**"). The lights will be equipped with mitigation features to restrict light spillage beyond the field as well as controls to ensure lights are turned off when facilities are not in use.

The University expects that Shaw Field will host no more than 25 games per year, inclusive of potential postseason games. The University also expects that average attendance (currently approximately 1,000 – 1,200 for men's matches, and 500 – 600 for women's matches) is not expected to increase as a result of field lighting. The University will also adopt measures to limit other impacts associated with extended use of Shaw Field:

- Shaw Field will not be used for any use beyond women's and men's soccer practices and games;
- Amplified noise at Shaw Field will be limited to games; and
- Games will end by 10 PM, inclusive of overtime.²

Finally, as set forth below, the University has proposed to modify Condition 23 to extend the limit on the start time for games at Cooper Field to Shaw Field as follows:

Condition 23(b): Weekday athletic events at Cooper Field or Shaw Field expected to draw over 100 visitors shall begin before 4:00 p.m. or after 7:00 p.m., unless agreed to by the GCP.

Amended Campus Plan exhibits reflecting the addition of lighting to Shaw Field are also attached and include:

² Exceptions will only be made for a post-overtime penalty kick shootout, which would only take place in post-season play and in the rare instance that the game is still tied after overtime.

- Updated Development Program Summary, which reflects the addition of Shaw Field lighting for height purposes, attached as Exhibit H.
- Updated Athletic and Recreational Facilities Plan, reflecting plans for Shaw Field as a near-term condition, attached as Exhibit I.

No other amendments to the Campus Plan are proposed in this Application.

IV. Georgetown Community Partnership (“GCP”) and Stakeholder Coordination

The GCP was created in 2012 as a forum to facilitate discussion, information sharing, and consensus-based decision making among University administrators, students, and members of the community. Since its inception, the GCP has operated in a genuine collegial partnership, with representatives of all stakeholder groups actively engaged to evaluate existing programming, identify creative solutions to quality-of-life concerns, implement and evaluate programs to fulfill Campus Plan commitments, and plan for the future use of the University’s Hilltop Campus.

Over the past several months, the University has worked closely with the GCP to address potential impacts of the proposed lights on surrounding neighbors and develop consensus regarding the Project. Outreach began in the summer of 2024 and has included multiple meetings with stakeholders of various neighborhoods, including Burleith, Foxhall, and Hillandale, as well as discussions with residents in the Cloisters, culminating in review and discussion of the proposals by the full GCP Steering Committee in November 2024.

The Hilltop Campus is located within the boundaries of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”) 2E and ANC 3D. The University has presented the application to ANC 2E at its September 30 meeting and ANC 3D at its October 9 meeting, and the University will continue to engage with both ANCs and other stakeholders prior to a public hearing on this Application.

The University also met with representatives of the National Park Service (“NPS”), which manages Glover Archbold Park, regarding the Application, and the University continues to follow up with NPS regarding details requested by NPS.

Concept plans have been discussed with staff at the Old Georgetown Board (“OGB”) and submitted for review at OGB’s November meeting.

V. Satisfaction of Subtitle X Standards

A. *College or University which is an Academic Institution of Higher Learning*

Georgetown University was chartered as an educational institution of higher learning by acts of Congress.

B. *The Use is Located so that it is Not Likely to Become Objectionable to Neighboring Property*

For the reasons set forth below, the Application is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property.

1. Lighting

The proposed addition of field lighting to Shaw Field is not likely to generate objectionable lighting impacts in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the campus. As discussed above, the proposed lighting system uses a leading-edge lighting system that focuses light on the field but minimizes light spillage beyond the immediate field, and the lights will be equipped with controls to ensure lights are turned off when facilities are not in use. All games will be scheduled to end by 10 PM, with exceptions only for postseason games that extend into overtime.

The University commissioned a study by its lighting design and consulting engineer, Henry Adams, LLC, to evaluate potential visual impacts of field lighting as well as the light poles themselves. The study exemplified 9 locations in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the campus (as well as two locations to the south) at both day and evening. The study demonstrated that the light poles would generally not be visible because of buildings or other obstructions. The study further demonstrated that the lighting itself would not be noticeable, both because of the obstructions and because of the low level of lighting beyond the field. While the light system will provide moderate lighting within a 150-foot range around the field (i.e. entirely within the campus), light beyond that perimeter would generally not exceed the typical low-level lighting for a sidewalk pathway. Renderings included in the Plans depict the anticipated extent of lighting and demonstrate the anticipated extent of light spillage.

2. Noise

The proposed addition of field lighting is not likely to lead to objectionable noise impacts. Shaw Field currently utilizes amplified sound during games that occur during the day, and amplified noise would remain limited to only games after the addition of field lighting. The University commissioned a sound study by Phoenix Noise and Vibrations to evaluate whether sound levels for evening games could generate objectionable impacts. Sound levels were measured

at seven locations, including at Shaw Field and in locations in Foxhall, Hillandale, and Burleith. The study considered levels of both amplified music and speech against background noise sources, including traffic, aircraft, and other ambient noise. The study determined that amplified music was not audible in any of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Amplified speech was barely audible but could not be understood except for short announcements (e.g. “Goal!”). Again, the University shared the results of the study with surrounding stakeholders. Finally, any amplified noise will be limited to games, and these games will end no later than 10 PM, inclusive of overtime (again, with the only exception being for post-overtime penalty kick shootouts, which only occur during postseason play and only in the rare instance that the game is still tied after overtime).

3. Traffic and Parking

The addition of field lighting is not likely to generate objectionable traffic and parking impacts in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. As discussed above, the addition of lighting is not expected to increase the number of attendees at men’s or women’s soccer matches (and many spectators are students who already live on or near campus and thus do not generate additional trips). Further, as explained above, the University has agreed to extend the same limits on start times that apply to Cooper Field to Shaw Field. This means that games during the week will be scheduled to start either before 4 PM or after 7 PM so that games do not generate additional trips during peak hour traffic on surrounding roadways. A transportation memorandum prepared by Wells & Associates, the University’s transportation consultant, is attached as Exhibit L and affirms the proposal will not affect parking or transportation measures established as a part of the Campus Plan.

4. Number of Students

The addition of field lighting will not impact enrollment or otherwise affect the number of students.

C. Compliance with the Maximum Bulk Requirement

As demonstrated on the updated Development Program Summary included in Exhibit I and the FAR Report attached as Exhibit J, the addition of field lighting does not affect the overall FAR for the Hilltop Campus. The FAR for the campus will remain at 1.36 FAR (inclusive of the addition of the Car Barn as is pending in Z.C. Case No. 16-18G and the completion of construction of the New Residential Complex that is replacing the former Henle Village), which is well within the permitted FAR of 1.56 approved in the Campus Plan (as amended herein) and within the 1.8 FAR maximum for a campus in the R-3 Zone.

D. Submission of a Plan for Developing the Campus as a Whole

The University's plan for developing the Campus as a whole, as required under Section 11-X DCMR § 101.8, was approved by the Zoning Commission in Z.C Order No. 16-18, which is attached as Exhibit F. The approved Campus Plan includes details on buildings, parking, and loading facilities; screening, signs, streets, and public utility facilities; athletic and other recreational facilities; and a description of all activities and of the capacity of all present and proposed development.

The Application amends this plan to incorporate an updated plan for Athletic and Recreational Facilities, attached as Exhibit I, and updates Condition 23(b) regarding start times to include Shaw Field. No other changes are proposed to the approved plan.

E. Interim and Off-Campus Land Use

The Application does not request the interim use of land for university use and it does not proposed the relocation of a major development site to an off-campus location.

F. Compliance with the Policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

A detailed evaluation of the Application's compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with the Commission's Racial Equity Tool, is attached as Exhibit K.

G. The Proposed Buildings are within the Floor Area Limit for the Campus as a Whole

As noted above and demonstrated on the FAR Report attached as Exhibit J, following the completion of all other developments under construction and assuming the amendment pending in Z.C. 16-18G is approved, the FAR for the Campus will be 1.36, which is well within the permitted FAR of 1.56 under the 2017 Campus Plan.

H. Referral to the District of Columbia Office of Planning, District Department of Transportation, and the Department of Energy and Environment

The Application will be referred to all three agencies for their review and report by the Office of Zoning. The University has reached out the D.C. Office of Planning regarding the Application and has met with the District Department of Transportation to discuss the Application.

I. The Application is in Harmony with the General Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map

As detailed by the Application's compliance with all of the standards noted above, the Application is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. The field lighting at Shaw Field is being implemented with mitigation measures and conditions to ensure that the use of the field remains compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

J. The Application will not Tend to Adversely Affect the use of Neighboring Properties

As detailed above, the Application will not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. As set forth above, the addition of field lighting as proposed in this Application is unlikely to generate lighting, noise, or other impacts on neighboring properties.

K. Concurrent Filing of Further Processing with a Campus Plan Amendment is Permitted

Pursuant to Subtitle X, Section 101.16, the concurrent filing of a further processing application is permitted with an amendment to a Campus Plan. Here, concurrent review is necessary to allow immediate implementation of the field lighting plan in time for the Fall 2025 season.

VI. Exhibits

The following exhibits are submitted in support of the Application:

<u>Exhibit A</u>	Application Signature Form
<u>Exhibit B</u>	Authorization Letter
<u>Exhibit C</u>	Building Plats
<u>Exhibit D</u>	Certificate of Notice and Copy of Notice of Intent
<u>Exhibit E</u>	Property Owner List
<u>Exhibit F</u>	2017 Campus Plan Order (Z.C. Order No. 16-18)
<u>Exhibit G</u>	Proposed Plans
<u>Exhibit H</u>	Updated Campus Plan Development Program Summary

Exhibit I Updated Campus Plan Athletic and Recreational Facilities Plan

Exhibit J FAR Report

Exhibit K Comprehensive Plan and Racial Equity Impact Evaluation

Exhibit L Transportation Statement

VII. Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, the Application meets the requirements for approval.

David M. Avitabile /s/

David M. Avitabile
Goulston & Storrs