

Resolution of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D regarding Georgetown University's 2010 Campus Plan, March 2, 2011

Whereas District of Columbia zoning regulations allow a university to operate in residential neighborhoods, provided that “it shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to a neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students or other objectionable concerns, “ Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D has reviewed the 2010 campus plan of Georgetown University and whereas the plan:

- Features a significant increase in graduate student enrollment—from 3500 students in 2000 to 6275 students in 2010 to 8750 students in 2020—more than doubling the number in 20 years—that is likely to generate a similar increase in students living in the adjacent communities—including Foxhall Village and the Palisades— or traveling through them, with attendant issues of added traffic, added rental housing, added density, added noise, added parking space demands, deferred home maintenance, and decreased property values
- Proposes a “loop road” on a steep slope overlooking Glover Archbold Park as a roadway for GUTS buses, in violation of the *spirit* of the agreement if not the *letter* of the agreement by which the university obtained land on Canal Road from the National Park Service to enlarge the campus entrance and signalized intersection through a Federal Highway Administration “demonstration project,” which the university termed “of significant benefit” and, in exchange, the university granted a scenic easement on 2.5 acres of its property to the National Park Service to satisfy the 20 percent state or local matching of Federal funds—land that the university pledged to protect as “open space in perpetuity”
- Promotes GUTS buses as a solution to traffic issues, noting that annual ridership has increased from 1 million in 2000 to 2 million in 2010—but does not mention terms of the scenic easement designed to protect Glover Archbold Park, particularly the agreement by the university to limit any traffic on a loop road to “service vehicles,” a definition that the university now asserts applies to GUTS buses, more than 200 of which would daily be routed along the fragile slope, threatening further damage to the parkland, destroying the nature of the scenic easement, and adding noise and exhaust to the park and the neighborhood
- Acknowledges that the steep slope has failed twice —that is, in 2007 and 2010— dumping sediment into Glover Archbold Park’s Foundry Branch, a stream that flows into the Potomac River—causing the National Park Service and the District of Columbia’s Department of the Environment to work with the university in an effort to stabilize the slope, prevent soil erosion, and control sediment; and, indeed the DDOE has recently fined the university \$30,000 for failing to apply for a permit and provide a soil erosion plan after the emergency work was completed as required by regulation.

- Has yet to offer an alternative to the proposed loop road, although a university official conceded that there are options; among these is a turn-around near the Lombardi Cancer Center
- Proposes a “cover” for the three-acre Kehoe Field on the edge of the steep slope overlooking Glover Archbold Park as the remedy for drainage issues, whereas the resulting 3-acre structure could be up to 50 feet tall, an incursion into scenic views from the Park, and a facility that would very likely create noise and traffic as a center for sports and other events, particularly to the Foxhall Village neighborhood
- Proposes 500,000 square feet of add-ons to the existing hospital, more than 2-1/2 times as large as the new business school building, a major addition to the community but does not offer specific information about the site for the new hospital, leaving open speculation that the “loop road” along the western perimeter of the campus could serve as the major access route
- As mitigation for removing mature, healthy trees to build the loop road, proposes to plant seedling trees to “screen” traffic and buildings from Glover Archbold Park and neighbors to the west, whereas generating traffic and constructing buildings will create quality of life issues—compromising the view scape, destroying the wooded nature of the site, and adding noise and exhaust to what should be restorative green space in an urban environment
- Has yet to acknowledge limits in a residential neighborhood—even for a campus of 104 acres—and proposes no reduction in the number of students or the use of the university’s land base designed to mitigate impacts on the community

Now therefore, expressing the desire to preserve the quiet, residential character of our neighborhoods Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D opposes Georgetown University’s 2010 campus plan.

Through a vote of ANC3D on March 2, 2011—

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Smith, Chair