

Georgetown University Shows Disregard For Its Neighbors

We recognize that Georgetown University, as a world-class educational institution, makes positive contributions to our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, being the University's neighbor also has major disadvantages, such as group-house noise, alcohol-fueled student misbehavior, traffic and parking congestion, trash, and blighted, unsafe housing stock. Georgetown University's 2010 Expansion Plan promises more of the same.

GU's plan proposes to increase enrollment by approximately 3,400 students from its 2009 level, but fails to provide any additional significant on-campus housing. It is clear GU will continue to rely on the existing homes in the surrounding neighborhoods—Georgetown, Burleith, Glover Park, and Foxhall—to house a substantial portion of its student body. This is unconscionable, irresponsible, and threatens the viability of our communities.

Other negative aspects of its plan include the construction of new mixed-use buildings in West Georgetown, despite the protests of residents and the accompanying increase in traffic through our already overburdened neighborhoods. Our communities are also concerned about the environmental impact of the proposed 83-foot-tall utility plant chimney, the proposed new loop road, the roof over Yates Sportscenter, and the alignment of 38th Street NW with GU's main campus and hospital entrance.

Georgetown University and President DeGioia's have failed to effectively manage off-campus student behavior. Disorderly conduct, late night noise, trash violations resulting in rodent infestation all fundamentally degrade our quality of life. The absence of on-campus housing in the proposed plan assures continuation of the town-gown stalemate that has defined our relations with the University for far too long.

An outpouring of concern by citizens has galvanized neighborhood associations representing the communities most affected by GU's intransigence. We stand together in opposing the GU plan.

We would like GU to honor its pledge to be a good neighbor, one of the 2010 plan's own guiding principles. We intend to hold GU to its responsibility to comply with the DC Zoning Regulations, which provide that a college or university shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

Our residents are joined in the fight for their neighborhoods. We expect Mayor Fenty and Councilmember Jack Evans and other councilmembers to support our efforts. D.C.'s Office of Planning and D.C.'s Zoning Commission need to require GU to comply with D.C.'s zoning regulations and help us protect our communities.

For a point-by-point rebuttal to GU's recent letter to the community please visit www.cagtown.org.

The Burleith Citizens Association, Citizens Association of Georgetown, Foxhall Community Citizens Association, Glover Park Citizens Association and Hillandale Homeowners Association