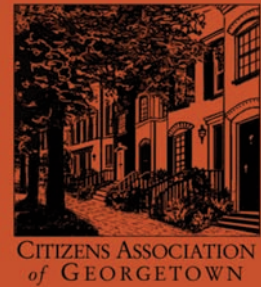


# Georgetown

## C I T I Z E N S



VOLUME XXIV / ISSUE 10 / DECEMBER 2010

WWW.CAGTOWN.ORG

### SPECIAL EDITION

## Georgetown University Campus Plan Threatens Neighborhood

### *Zoning Commission to Review GU 10-Year Plan*

With Georgetown University expected to file its 2011-2020 campus plan with the Zoning Commission by December 31, 2010, this newsletter provides information that all residents need to know and consider. The community plays a critical role in the review process so CAG is providing this concise overview.

CAG has been working diligently to oppose a significant expansion of Georgetown University that will negatively impact all of Georgetown's residents.

For years, the communities adjacent to the University have complained about unrestrained growth and disorderly student behavior. Further, President DeGioia has failed to manage or reduce problematic off-campus student conduct.

The University's unwillingness to effectively address neighborhood impacts has galvanized neighborhood associations—CAG, the Burleith Citizens Association, Foxhall Community Citizens Association, and others—against the proposed growth.

In the past year, multiple public and private meetings with the University to discuss the adverse impacts on our neighborhoods have not produced changes to the proposed plan that will address the unrestrained growth and development.

As of this writing, areas of the plan that we oppose are based on the draft plan that was distributed in 2009. We don't expect significant changes in the final plan that will be submitted to

the Zoning Commission by December 31, 2010. We will provide an update as soon as the final plan is submitted as well as updates during the Zoning Commission's review process.



## CONTENT

What GU Wants & Why CAG Is Opposed .....	2
Enrollment Growth and Insufficient Housing .....	3
From a Student's Point of View.....	4
Neighborhood Safety Questions .....	5
The 1789 Block: Housing More Georgetown Students.....	5

Who Decides? Politics and Decision Makers .....	6
Expanding enrollment to impact East Georgetown.....	8
Why the "Save Our Neighborhood Fund?" .....	9
Make Your Views Known! .....	9
Environmental Hazards from Smokestack .....	10

## What GU Wants & Why CAG Is Opposed

Georgetown University's proposed Campus Plan encroaches on the community through enrollment growth, insufficient on-campus housing, and ineffectual traffic management as well as the absence of a long-term sustainability plan.

**The GU plan would not mitigate any of these issues but would worsen them. Specifically, the proposed plan calls for:**

- An increase in student enrollment by more than 3,200 students from its 2009 level
- Providing no additional housing on the traditional campus thereby forcing more students to live off campus in neighborhoods

- The construction of mixed-use buildings in West Georgetown on the "1789 block" including 8,000 square feet of service retail space
- Building an 83-foot tall smokestack to replace a 10-foot tall chimney posing environmental risks to the community
- Adding 700 parking spaces to accommodate anticipated additional traffic to the campus and the hospital

We have consistently communicated with GU administrators and District officials the need to create a Campus Plan that better manages enrollment, provide more on-campus housing, improve campus and neighborhood safety, and reduce parking and traffic impacts on the neighborhoods.



**Common view in front of student rental houses.**



## Enrollment Growth and Insufficient Housing

When GU requires a quarter of its students to live in overcrowded off campus rental housing that often fails to meet health and safety standards, it endangers student safety and reduces the quality of the student experience. These rental properties are rarely properly maintained and contribute to the deterioration of the neighborhood. Trash and rats, for example, create serious health issues that affect all parties.

Further exacerbating the problem is the University's proposed enrollment increase that will add approximately 3,200 students from its 2009 level and fails to provide any additional on-campus housing. **It is clear that GU will continue to rely on existing homes in the surrounding neighborhoods to house a substantial portion of its ever expanding student population.**

GU can not continue to use the neighborhood for its residence halls. Signs proclaiming "Our homes, not GU dorms" are a reaction to the fact that 48% of homes in Burleith are rented, mostly to GU students.

**In 2000, GU told the community that they would only enroll 3,873 graduate students by 2010: their current count is 6,275**

The former single-family, owner occupied neighborhood is at risk of disappearing.

In Georgetown, over 113 houses have been turned from single family houses to group rentals and it is difficult and expensive to convert them back.

Many of these residences are poorly maintained and house more people than legally allowed, often bringing both excessive trash and noise. This result has prompted residents to move out of the area.

It also creates added costs for the city in terms of reduced tax revenue and overuse of city services such as trash removal.

Losing the balance between transient students and permanent residents means losing the neighborhood. If we fail at reversing the trend, the future of Georgetown and surrounding communities is uncertain.

For these reasons, GU needs to reinstate its 1990 goal of housing 100% of its undergraduates on campus and agree to reasonable caps on enrollment for both graduate and undergraduate students.

### From a Student's Point of View

*Excerpt from an article by Kara Brandeisky in The Georgetown Voice (November 11, 2010)*

"... The heart of the issue is that there's simply not enough room for everybody, so students are only guaranteed three years of on-campus housing. Every year, students are forced into the surrounding neighborhood.

Some students enjoy the independence and freedom from Georgetown bureaucracy, but off-campus living comes with its own pitfalls such as longer walks to campus and fun encounters with the Metropolitan Police Department or Student Neighborhood Assistance Program when a party gets too loud. Interestingly, the most vocal opponents of this arrangement aren't the students—they're the residents. They object to our

party habits, our trash, our noise, and our choice in pizza. If you've ever taken a walk through Burleith, you know from their subtle "Our Homes, Not GU's Dorm" lawn signs and their resentful stares: they want us out.

But there's simply nowhere else to go. Georgetown residents frequently feign concern for students by bemoaning the "slum landlords"—read: their neighbors—who charge exorbitant prices for sub-standard housing. As someone who spent the summer battling bedbugs in Burleith, I'm not going to contest that characterization. But with University housing in short supply, off-campus housing is a seller's market..."



## Neighborhood Safety Questions

*Three safety questions for Georgetown residents:*

1. Do you think that having dozens of individuals running (or worse: driving) around the neighborhood under the influence of alcohol or drugs, knocking down stop signs, yanking metal railings, damaging private property, urinating in public, buying or selling drugs, strolling around semi-consciously at 4 o'clock in the morning, makes our neighborhood more or less safe?
2. If police officers have to respond to numerous 911 calls concentrated in a few blocks on the far west side, can they also consistently patrol and protect residential areas all the way to 26th street and Reservoir Road?
3. When parts of a neighborhood are dirty with trash scattered, poorly maintained houses, front and back yards abandoned, — are bad characters attracted or repelled by such an environment?

In 2009 our police department had to service a disproportionate number of 911 calls for Disorderly Conduct between 10pm and 4am all related to blocks closest to campus. *See the map above to get a clear idea where the calls are coming from.*



**Disorderly conduct 911 calls distribution in the residential areas**

1. **The neighborhood as a whole is less safe.** Bad actors are attracted by the abundant presence of potential victims. Loud noise at all hours of the night may provide cover for break-ins; constant presence of intoxicated groups walking around until 4am may help disguise burglars; and residents have a hard time detecting serious cries for help.
2. **Responding to hundreds of 911 calls for disorderly conduct is a huge diversion for our limited police resources.** If MPD patrols have to spend hours looking after intoxicated individuals they cannot patrol the neighborhood. There is a long standing history of disruptive behavior on certain blocks. Since 2001, the source of the problems is always the same blocks. It is not uncommon to see several police officers tied up for long period of time and returning to the same locations over and over.
3. **Urban disorder and vandalism breeds additional crime and anti-social behavior.** According to “broken window” theory, urban disorder and vandalism has a norm setting and signaling effect that produces additional crime and anti-social behavior. Maintaining urban environments in a well-ordered condition has been shown to reduce vandalism and deter more serious criminal behavior. This is the situation in Georgetown.



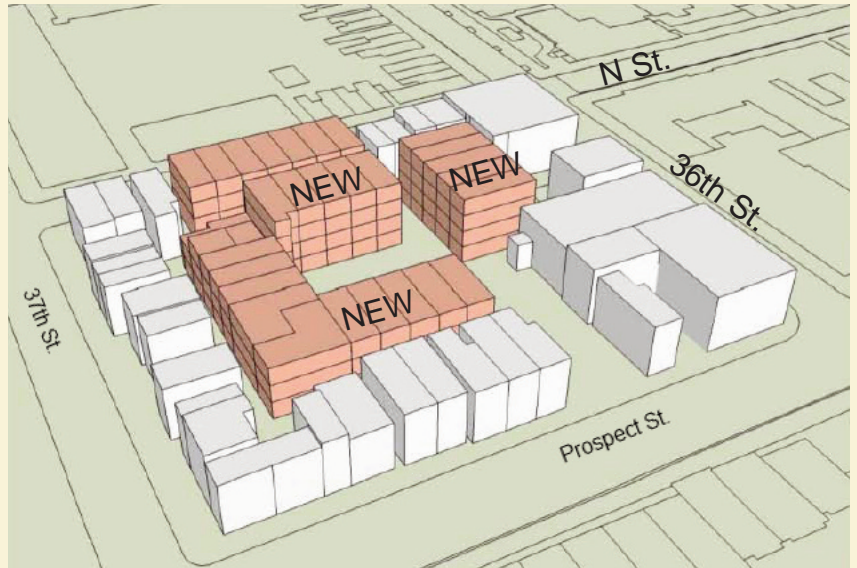
**Several police officers controlling crowds and intoxicated individuals at midnight**

## The 1789 Block: More Students in Our Neighborhood?

Despite the protests from neighbors, Georgetown is planning to expand its student housing further into the residential portion of the West Village by developing the “1789 block”—the block bounded on the north by N street, on the south by Prospect Street, and on the east and west by 36th and 37th Streets.

The plan adds a large dormitory with 120 beds and 8,500 square feet of retail space including 60 underground parking spaces.

The proposed construction would rise higher than the existing historic townhomes on the north side of Prospect. Though underground parking is planned, it will not accommodate the number of proposed residents and the proposed commercial establishments. Additionally, some existing street parking in this already congested area would need to be eliminated in order to accommodate the proposed vehicle entry on 37th Street.



**Shaded buildings are GU's proposed mixed-use residence/retail facilities set among historic houses and buildings.**

---

*It is clear that the addition of over 100 new occupants on one block would bring a dramatic change in the quality of life in the neighborhood*

---

Georgetown students occupy the University-owned townhouses on the north side of Prospect Street, and the residents on the owner-occupied South side of Prospect and St. Mary's Place already contend with excessive noise, trash, and late-night parties. However, it is clear that the addition of over 100 new occupants on one block would bring a dramatic change in the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Neighbors have recommended that any development be limited to administrative use. Neighbors have also recommended moving the parking access to 36th or N Street to relieve traffic and preserve street parking on 37th and Prospect Streets, which already have metro buses, GU shuttles, and restaurant delivery trucks to contend with.

No additional commercial establishments are needed in the immediate area; there are several dry-cleaners, a coffee shop, a delicatessen/grocery, a hardware store, restaurants, and more within two blocks. Lastly, neighbors requested that the buildings not be higher than the historic town homes they will sit behind. This new construction will be all too visible from the neighboring homes and will eliminate the view of our village.

Sadly, these comments and requests from residents have not been acknowledged in any of the iterations of the 10-year plan.

---

*GU is an integral part of the neighborhood and the citizens of Georgetown and Burleith and surrounding communities are committed to fostering a mutually beneficial living and learning community.*

*All residents, including students, deserve a clean, quality neighborhood.*

### **CAG GU Relations Committee**

Cynthia Pantazis, *Chair*  
 Jennifer Altemus, Karen Cruse,  
 Betsy Cooley, Karl Bourdeau,  
 Roberto Coquis, Michelle Galler,  
 Richard Hinds, Gianluca Pivato,  
 Shannon Pryor

## Who Decides? Politics and Decision Makers

### Campus Plan Review Process

The Campus Plan will be reviewed by the DC Zoning Commission. This process will take approximately 6-8 months from the time GU submits a final plan. During this period, CAG, the Burleith Citizens Association along with other residents' groups will seek to build broad support for the community's concerns. Our efforts will be targeted at the Zoning Commission, DC Office of Planning, Mayor-elect Vincent Gray, DC Council including at-large members and ANC2E.

### Role of Political Leaders

To ensure the community's concerns are addressed, it is critical that our political leaders weigh in publicly during the process and support the residents.

The following city officials can play a key role in the process. We encourage all residents to contact these officials early and often to underscore the adverse impacts on our neighborhoods and the failure of the Campus Plan to mitigate them. CAG's website provides sample letters that can be used to articulate key points of concern.

### Mayor-elect Vincent Gray

Mayor-elect Gray will be inaugurated on January 2. While campaigning, Gray demonstrated an awareness of the concerns that residents have been articulating. He also underscored the role of the Zoning Commission.

In August, he spoke about the need for campus plans across the city to deal with "this sprawling presence of undergraduates" along with "student housing in the communities, and the parties, and all of the behavior that comes with that."

"Ultimately, the Zoning Commission, with the members being appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council, has the authority to approve these ten year plans, and that's why I support people on the Zoning Commission who are sensitive to how a community develops."

Although Gray has shown some sensitivity to the community, the position he will take when GU's plan is filed with the Zoning Commission remains unknown. While

### Timeline for Review

- **GU will submit a final Plan to the Zoning Commission and Office of Planning by no later than December 31, 2010.**
- **Office of Planning should review the plan and submit a report and recommendations to the Zoning Commission within 45 days.**
- **Zoning Commission should hold public hearings approximately 8 weeks after GU files a final plan.**
- **There will likely be 3-6 evening hearings held by the Zoning Commission.**

Though our outreach to political leaders is ongoing, it will be critical for residents to contact political leaders and, most notably, members of the Zoning Commission, following GU's filing of its final Campus Plan with the Commission. CAG will alert members when the plan is filed.

the Zoning Commission is the ultimate decision maker, who the mayor appoints to the Commission and the position he takes on the need for universities like GU to house their students on campus is very important.

At this point, there are concerns stemming from the appointments to Gray's transition. Three of the Mayor-elect's key advisors have ties to GU. Two come from GU's Law Center — Robert Spanoletti and Peter Edelman. They will assist with law and public policy and health and human services respectively. Alice Rivlin, a visiting professor at GU's Public Policy Institute will focus on fiscal issues and the budget.

Gray also named former GW President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg as the head of the economic development committee. GW has been one of the largest developers in the city over the past several years.

### Office of Planning

The Office of Planning (OP) deals with urban design, land use and historic preservation review. OP will review GU's Plan, analyze the impact of the plan on the community and write a report that will guide the Zoning Commission in

their review. The Zoning Commission usually places significant weight on the Office of Planning's assessment and recommendations.



## Make Your Views Known

**Mayor-elect Vincent Gray**  
vgray@dccouncil.us until  
January; then, as Mayor: eom@dc.gov

**Jack Evans**—jackevans@dccouncil.us

**Chairman-elect Kwame Brown**  
kbrown@dccouncil.us

**Harriett Tregoning, OP**  
Harriet.Tregoning@dc.gov

**ANC2E Commissioners are:**  
**Ed Solomon** (2E01)  
DCtuxedo@aol.com

**Ron Lewis, Chairman** (2E02)  
Ron.Lewis@anc.dc.gov

**Jeff Jones** (2E03) 2EO3@anc.dc.gov  
(beginning January 2011)

**Bill Skelsey** (until January 1, 2011)  
BillSkelseyANC@aol.com

**Jake Sticka** (2E04)  
jakesticka8@gmail.com  
Georgetown University student

**Bill Starrels** (2E05)  
Bill.Starrels@anc.dc.gov

**Tom Birch** (2E06)  
bircht@earthlink.net

**Charles Eason** (2E07)  
Charles.Eason@anc.dc.gov

### Councilmembers

Jack Evans has stated that he supports the residents concerns and has flatly stated that he will not permit an 83 foot tall industrial smokestack to be built. But we hope he will do more.

Evans can make public statements supporting our specific positions and emphasizing the risk posed to the neighborhood by not requiring GU to house its undergraduate students on campus. He can also testify before the Zoning Commission about the adverse impacts that GU's growth has had on our neighborhoods.

We believe his voice can go a long way in communicating the importance of our concerns and the need for the Zoning Commission to require the University to address them.

As head of the Council, Chairman-elect Kwame Brown can also be a critical asset in articulating the resident's concerns.

### Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

ANC2E represents Burleith, Georgetown and Hillandale. The ANC2E has been working with CAG and BCA as we develop our case and advocacy in order to project a united front against the Campus Plan.

Though the ANC2E has yet to take up a motion in opposition to the Campus Plan, we will encourage them to do so once the final plan has been filed with the Zoning Commission. Based on their public statements, we believe that most of the Commissioners support our opposition to the current draft Campus Plan.

### Zoning Commission

The ZC is an independent, quasi-judicial body that prepares, adopts and amends the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The ZC approves new campus plans.

The ZC is comprised of five members. Three members of the ZC are residents of DC appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. The fourth member is the Architect of the Capitol and the fifth member is the Director of the National Park Service.

#### The current members of the ZC are:

- Anthony J. Hood, *Chairman (a holdover who may be reappointed or replaced by the new mayor)*
- Konrad Schlater, *Vice-Chairman*
- Greg Selfridge, *DC resident*
- Michael Turnbull, *Architect of the Capitol Designee*
- Peter May, *National Park Service Designee.*

The Zoning Commission needs to know what is needed to minimize the adverse impacts on our historic neighborhoods.

- Cap enrollment for both undergraduate and graduate students; counts of students, faculty and staff should be standardized (not averaged) and the Zoning Administrator should audit enrollment on an annual basis.
- Reinstitute the goal of 100% on-campus housing for undergraduates, curtailing the expansion of student housing into the neighborhood so that GU can not continue to use the neighborhood for its residence halls.
- Restrict any new construction on the "1789 block" to administrative purposes. Undergraduate dorms and student rental group houses already heavily impact this residential area.
- Mitigate traffic and parking impacts on the neighborhood. The addition of 700 parking spaces will only increase traffic and does not address restricting the ability of undergraduates to bring cars into the community.
- Commit to no increase in emissions from any planned construction of a new smokestack

**Citizens Association of Georgetown**

1365 Wisconsin Ave NW,  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20007  
202 337-7313  
Fax: 202 333-1088  
E-mail: [cagmail@cagtown.org](mailto:cagmail@cagtown.org)  
Website: [www.cagtown.org](http://www.cagtown.org)

**Board of Directors**

Jennifer Altemus  
*President*

Gianluca Pivato  
*Vice President*

Robert Laycock  
*Treasurer*

Hazel Denton  
*Secretary*

Louise Brodnitz  
Diane Colasanto  
Renee Esfandiary Crupi  
Karen Cruse  
Barbara Downs  
Brad Gray  
Pamla Moore  
Cynthia Pantazis

**Legal Advisor**

Richard deC. Hinds

**Executive Director**

Betsy Cooley  
*Program Assistant*, Elizabeth Maloy  
*Office Assistant*, Beth Nielsen

**Standing Committees**

*Alcoholic Beverage Control*  
Karen Cruse & John Hopkins

*Beautification Committee*  
Patrick Clawson & David Dunning

*Historic Preservation and Zoning*  
Pamla Moore

*Membership*  
Diane Colasanto

*Public Safety & Guard*  
Luca Pivato & Richard Hinds

*Trees for Georgetown*  
Betsy Emes

*Newsletter*  
Betsy Cooley, *Editor*  
Marjorie Kask, *Graphic Designer*

## Expanding Enrollment Will Impact East Georgetown

Some east side residents, who previously owned west side homes, are convinced that the west side is deteriorating and many also believe that the east side is safe from GU's aggressive expansion — from run-down properties, trash, vandalism and other effects that come with a large influx of students.

Unfortunately, the east side of Georgetown is already paying a price for GU's overflow of students, and it is about to get worse.

The map indicates student addresses in Georgetown and Burleith (as of 2009). The red dots represent undergraduate student addresses. The yellow dots represent graduate student address.



Now consider the following:

- East Georgetown has more graduate students than the west side.
- The yellow dots are fewer than the actual rentals since graduate students do not have to register their local address.
- The west side is close to saturation, which will force additional students to look for rental housing on the east side.
- GU is proposing to increase the graduate students population to 8,750 by 2020.
- In 2000, GU told the community that they would only enroll 3,873 graduate students by 2010; their current count is 6,275.

Given the trends, no area of Georgetown is immune from the decline and conversion of large areas of our neighborhood to a poorly supervised college dorm environment.



## Why the “SAVE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD FUND”?

The Zoning Regulation that controls the approval of the campus plan is “**the 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.**”

Yet neighbors are routinely subjected to offensive and disturbing behavior by GU students. This has forced many residents to give up hope of sleeping peacefully at night, enjoying their yards, or living on a clean and well-kept block. Some residents have even moved out of the area due to the disruptive student behavior, poorly maintained houses, improperly handled trash, and unregistered student cars that add to parking and traffic congestion.

This situation is untenable. Therefore it is imperative that we take a strong stand in front of the Zoning Commission.

To do this we need your financial support. We are using the **Save Our Neighborhood Fund** to hire expert consultants to present our case to the Zoning Commission and politicians — and to present our objections and information to the community.

Please send your tax deductible contribution today.

Yard signs shown on page 1 are available from CAG: 337.7313 or email [cagmail@cagtown.org](mailto:cagmail@cagtown.org)

### YES, I want to support the **SAVE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD FUND!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\$300 \_\_\_\_\$500 \_\_\_\_\$1000 \_\_\_\_\$5000 \_\_\_\_Other

Make your TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation payable to *CAG Save Our Neighborhood Fund*

Or donate online at [www.cagtown.org](http://www.cagtown.org)—click **Save Our Neighborhood Fund**

1365 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 200, Washington DC 20007 ~ 337-7313 ~ Fax 333-1088

### Make Your Views Known!

It is also vital that you make your views known! Letters to the D.C. Office of Planning, our Council Member Jack Evans and government officials are important to help them understand how our community is impacted by the increasing number of students and group houses off campus, and the attendant traffic, parking, noise and trash problems. Your letter can be mailed, faxed or emailed.

Identify yourself and how long you have been a resident. Please be specific and cite first-hand incidents or problems including trash, late night noise, parties, traffic and parking. **Go to the CAG website for sample letters and campus plan updates.**

Thank you for your participation in this critical neighborhood issue.

**Citizens Association of Georgetown**  
1365 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 200  
Washington DC 20007.  
202 337-7313  
Fax: 202 333-1088  
E-mail: [cagmail@cagtown.org](mailto:cagmail@cagtown.org)  
Website: [www.cagtown.org](http://www.cagtown.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED  
FIRST CLASS MAIL

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT #6104  
ALEXANDRIA, VA

83 feet

## Environmental Hazards from GU Smokestack

GU plans to build an 83-foot smokestack on top of its heating and cooling plant to replace the existing 10-foot tall chimney, but many questions remain.

After numerous requests, GU shared only two limited reports with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission including an exhaust re-entrainment study from 2007 and a 2009 emission summary. However, GU has not explained the purpose of building an industrial sized smokestack.

Further GU cannot commit that the proposed industrial sized smokestack will not increase or reduce emissions. From the little that has been disclosed, it seems that the new smokestack would merely divert pollution from GU to surrounding neighborhoods.

Finally, GU has not articulated a long-term sustainability — carbon management — strategy for reducing its environmental impact on the community.

Both American University and George Washington University have signed the American College and University Climate Commitment along with more than 500 institutions nationwide. These institutions are developing long range plans to become carbon neutral campuses. GU has not signed the Commitment.

10 feet

6 feet

