



## **ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E**

**TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS**  
c/o Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015

[www.anc3e.org](http://www.anc3e.org)

June 11, 2015

BY E-MAIL

Russell Shaw  
Head of School  
Georgetown Day School  
4200 Davenport Street NW  
Washington DC 20016

Dear Russell:

ANC 3E writes to share its concern about traffic management related to Georgetown Day School's (GDS) proposal to enlarge its Tenleytown footprint by consolidating its Lower and Middle Schools with its Tenleytown High School and adding a large residential and commercial development. This topic has been discussed extensively at the April and May ANC meetings, at several meetings between the Commission and GDS and its consultants, and between GDS and community residents.

ANC 3E welcomes new development beyond what is permitted as of right, provided that burden to the public associated with the development is sufficiently mitigated, and benefits to the public are sufficiently high. In all cases, this has required extensive collaboration and negotiation between the ANC and developers. The process has been challenging and often long, but it has yielded projects such as Tenley View and AU Law School's Tenley Campus that will confer great net benefits to *both* the community and the developers.

GDS' proposal constitutes the largest PUD application Tenleytown has seen. Nonetheless, ANC 3E has worked, and will continue to work, with GDS to realize its aspirations. Yet we expect GDS to work with the ANC to realize important community aspirations.

To be acceptable, GDS' proposal must, among other things, meet the highest standards of sustainability. Accordingly, with regard to transportation, the Commission has consistently advocated for three transportation principles: 1) limiting the generation of automobile trips; 2) encouraging use of non-car transportation modes, including pedestrian, bicycle, public transit and private busses; and 3) streets that are safe for all users.

The Commission has repeatedly urged GDS to bring forward a transportation plan that follows these principles. In particular, commissioners have asked for a transportation plan that produces no net increase in automobile trips from the combined GDS campus and incorporates effective measures to replace the use of cars with walking, biking, carpooling, private busses, and use of Metro Bus and Rail. We recognize this change in car-culture may not be immediately achievable, but inasmuch as GDS has indicated it does not expect to open its consolidated campus for four or five years, we believe it has sufficient time to implement such change.

To date, GDS's efforts have not been responsive to the Commission's request. The most recent information prepared by GDS traffic consultants and shared with the Commission on June 5 show a **72% increase in arrivals by car to the Tenleytown campus** once the consolidation is complete.

According to GDS numbers, a total of 448 cars arrive at the Tenleytown campus today (295 drop-offs + 153 employees and student drivers). GDS projects— *with its proposed TDM measures in place* -- a **72% increase** in car arrivals to the new consolidated campus. According to its draft numbers, there would be 508 drop-offs + 264 employee and student drivers for a total of 772, or **324 more car arrivals**. This translates to **more than 1000 new car trips a day on neighborhood residential streets**.<sup>1</sup>

Strikingly, despite the current high school's proximity to two Metro stations and multiple regional bus routes, GDS' data show that *only 11.5% of current high school students use Metrorail or Metrobus* to get to school, and *GDS' target for Metro usage to the new consolidated campus is only 12.0%*. Current Metro use by GDS staff is even lower and projected use no better.

We believe that GDS's current proposal for managing traffic to and from the school falls far below what is acceptable from a sustainability perspective, and likely would have a significant adverse impact on the Tenleytown and AU Park communities.<sup>2</sup>

We are familiar with other private schools that require most students to arrive by bus. GDS could impose similar requirements, but the school's propinquity to Metro affords alternative opportunities for non-car arrivals unavailable to these other schools. To be clear, however, we reasonably expect GDS to impose enforceable *requirements* that most students arrive at school by modes other than automobile, just as other private schools have done. GDS' own data demonstrate that mere incentives to use transit make little difference.

Although the closure of Safeway will reduce the car trips associated with the store, with no data presented to us to the contrary, we reasonably believe the mixed-use development will result in a net increase in car trips relative to the *status quo ante*. Unlike the school, which students attend subject to the rules GDS prescribes, GDS has relatively few options to compel reduction of car trips with its planned mixed-use development. Significant trip reduction will thus likely have to come from rules for getting to and from the school.

As GDS has not yet shared any data or management plans regarding the transportation needs of shoppers at, residents of, or visitors to the planned mixed-use development, we are as of yet unable otherwise to concretely evaluate this aspect of the proposal.

GDS recently stated that it intends to file a PUD application in September for the school and mixed-use development. We have raised a number of other significant issues with you and we will provide those in writing shortly. As noted, we hope to be able to support GDS's ambitious goals for its

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<sup>11</sup> Assuming that each "drive and park" arrival also includes a departure, there would be two trips associated with each one. Likewise, assuming that each drop-off also includes a departure in the morning and an arrival and departure in the afternoon, there would be four trips associated with each one.

<sup>2</sup> We note that part of GDS' development proposal involves taking a significant amount of public space along 42<sup>nd</sup> Street for GDS' use, which would involve narrowing 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. The projected traffic increase combined with the street narrowing implicates planning challenges including street width, inclusion of a bike lane, on-street parking and pedestrian safety.

school and commercial and residential density as a project that will provide significant net benefits both to the community and the school.

However, to do so, the facts must support a finding that the project constitutes a significant net benefit to the community. As you know, the Zoning Commission will also apply the same standard. With respect to traffic management issues alone the project as currently presented likely would not meet that standard.

We urge GDS to work with the ANC to develop a set of enforceable rules that mitigate traffic in the surrounding community and demonstrate that auto trips resulting from the consolidated school will not exceed current levels, and to present data regarding and a management plan for traffic associated with the proposed mixed-use development.

The ANC appreciates that this development has the potential to bring increased vibrancy to this corridor, but also want to ensure negative transportation effects do not take away from our ability to support the project moving forward.

This letter passed by a vote of 5-0-0 at a properly noticed meeting held on June 11th, 2015, at which a quorum was present, with Commissioners Bender, McHugh, Quinn, Hall, and Wallace in attendance.

ANC 3E

By Jonathan Bender, Chairperson

cc: Mary Cheh  
Leif Domsjo  
Eric Shaw  
Ryan Westrom