

Howard University Campus Plan Task Force

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

30 June 2010

6:30 p.m.

Attendees

Sylvia Robinson, Exec. Director, Emergence Community Arts Collective (ECAC)
Georgia Avenue Development Task Force
Patrick Nelson, ECAC and Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH),
ANC 1B Design Committee
Anita Rice, LeDroit Park Civic Association
Richard Myers, President, LeDroit Park Civic Association
Benton Heimsath, Councilmember Graham's Office
Thomas Dawes, Development Corporation of Columbia Heights, Georgia Avenue
Development Task Force
Faraji Whalen, GADGET Center
Myla Moss, ANC 1B01
Eduardo Ferrer, ANC 1B10
Robert Brannum, President, Bloomingdale Civic Association
A.K. Adams, GADGET Center
Ernest Quimby, Howard University Professor Sociology/Anthropology, Georgia
Avenue Development Task Force
Haydar Kurban, Howard University Professor of Economics
Diane Branch, Howard University Associate Vice President for Real Estate
Maybelle Taylor Bennett, Director, Howard University Community Association

Meeting Highlights

The meeting began with a round of introductions, the receipt of the paragraphs describing the Pleasant Plains community history from Sylvia Robinson. Patrick Nelson reported that he was unable to find the D.C. Federation of Civic Associations official map of civic association boundaries, but would continue to look.

Housing Presentation

Paul Brailsford, of Brailsford and Dunlavy gave the presentation on housing based on the *Existing Conditions Report* materials previously circulated to the members of the task force. The full presentation is available electronically upon request. In summary, the following findings were described:

Market Context

- In 1964, black college students made up 7% of all college students in the country, and blacks made up 12 % of the U.S. population.

- In 1964, of that 7% of black college students, 75% of them attended historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), while only 25% of them attended traditionally white colleges and universities.
- By 2006, blacks make up 13% of all college students and blacks make up 13% of the U.S. population; however, in 2006, unlike in 1964, 88% of all black college students attend traditionally white colleges and universities, while only 12% of them attend HBCUs. So HBCUs are capturing a shrinking percentage of the population of black students, and must therefore become much more competitive than they needed to be in the past when segregation limited the choices that black students had.
- The good news is that high school graduates are attending college in much greater proportions than they once did. The bad news is that the quality of student has not stayed high.

Student Housing

Studies that have been done on why students reject colleges and universities to which they have been accepted found that they found fault with the quality of facilities on campus, and of the facilities with which they found greatest fault, residential facilities were at the top of the list. Students who come from a greater distance are more dependent on housing than those students who come from within local markets.

Howard University has the capacity to house 45% of its students as compared with the George Washington University, Georgetown University and American University, which house between 60 and 70% of their students. An additional hardship is place on students in the Washington, D.C. area because there is little other housing choice off campus for students. Housing is either in poor condition, too expensive or too far from campus. Each year, more students apply for housing than is available, which forces them to seek housing off campus, and they do not find private purpose-based housing being built in this area. As a result, Howard's recruitment and retention efforts are being impeded because of the lack of housing.

Ideally, the University prefers to have its housing located closer in to the campus core. This is especially true for housing younger students. Currently, there are 4,609 beds in the total student housing inventory. On average, each student occupies 330 sq. ft. of space, which is above the national average and signals inefficiently-used residential buildings. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the University's housing inventory is over 50 years old. Much of the housing is functionally obsolete, and much of the housing is not located in ideal locations (e.g. Meridian, Slowe and Carver Halls).

In addition, the unit types are not properly matched by type of student. Freshmen need more traditional dormitory-style housing, and the University has only 1709 traditional units for 2,309 freshmen. Sophomores and juniors should be housed in suites, and there are insufficient suites for these students. Some juniors and seniors should be housed in apartment-style units, and again, there are insufficient numbers of these kinds of units to meet the needs of these student types. Also, the unit types available are mismatched in suitability by gender type. Howard's enrollment is 66% female and 34% male.

In summary, 1,100 beds are in the wrong place, and 1,100 beds are needed to meet current demand. There needs to be another 2,100 to 2,600 new beds developed based on existing demographic data. Approximately 800,000 to 1,000,000 sq. ft. of housing will need to be built, and not all of this can be fit into the campus core area, though in-fill strategies can be developed for meeting some of this demand. This estimate is not based on any projection of future increases in enrollment. Currently, 30.9% of the existing beds are located within the campus core; 44.7% are located within the campus edge areas; and 1,121 beds are located well off campus.

Questions and Answers

Patrick Nelson asked if as the campus plan process proceeds, whether the definition of what constitutes the campus core is likely to change. Maybelle Bennett responded that it was likely that could happen.

Myla Moss noted that the Broadway Atlantic properties south of Barry Place were in foreclosure, and that those properties were located within the campus edge areas. She mentioned that other developers are coming to the ANC 1B showing an interest in this area and indicated that housing in this location would be preferable to its remaining vacant as it stands now.

Patrick Nelson mentioned that Howard already has parcels of land abutting the core which are not being used where housing can be built.

Recreational Facilities

Texas, Florida, Minnesota and THE Ohio State Universities are the largest in the country with approximately 50,000 in them each, and thus can be expected to have the resources to have some of the most state of the art facilities for athletics and recreation.

Slides of Northeastern University's Recreation Center and DePauw's recreation centers were shown. Both were within an urban context, both were mixed use in nature, including food services, with Northeastern having retail and DePauw having a large pool. Mention was also made of the George Washington University's health and wellness center on 23rd Street here in Washington.

Recreation facilities can fill up the entire zoning envelope (as in DePauw's case) and can be flexible in the type of architecture used in their development, where they can be distinctive in nature or blend in. Such facilities can anchor student neighborhoods, catalyze retail development at the campus edge or student centers, support alumni and community relations, and can relate to health service units. In order to allow use by the community, extended insurance to cover non-university people can run in the neighborhood of \$50,000- \$60,000 per year.

Howard has a very inactive student population, largely because there are few facilities available for student recreational use. Based on a survey of students, 22% of students do not exercise or participate in any recreation; 28% exercise or recreate less than 1.5 hours per week; 26% exercise or recreate between 1.5 and 3.0 hours per week; 15% exercise or

recreate between 3 and 6 hours per week; and 9% exercise or recreate 6 or more hours per week. Women, as it turns out, are slightly more active than the men.

The University has no recreation center, and Burr Gymnasium is used by academic and athletics programs first, and by those interested in recreation, last. Currently, the University needs 110,000 – 120,000 sq. ft. of recreational space.

Attractive recreation centers are good recruitment tools, and a new facility would relieve the space limitations that the athletics department is currently experiencing.

Athletic Facilities

Howard now sponsors 16 intercollegiate athletic teams as a member of the MEAC Conference. The teams are supported by two primary facility assets: Burr Gymnasium and Green Stadium, both of which are shared with recreation and academic programs. Since 1964, while other universities were upgrading their facilities to state-of-the-art standards, nothing was happening with Howard's facilities, which put them several generations behind in capacity and quality. Most institutions are strapped for funds, and therefore select a flagship sports program or set of programs in which they can excel.

Athletic facility development drivers include:

- competitive pressure
- Title IX compliance
- recruiting of athletes and coaches
- retention of coaches
- donor interests
- consistency of image and standards

The Ohio State University grosses \$100 million per year from its sports programs, and nets about \$20 million. In the facility assessment matrix displayed to the group, where 5 was the most outstanding rating a facility could get, Howard's athletics facilities averaged 1.8, which is well below the 3.3 or 3.5 that represent Howard's own aspirations.

Any athletic facility redevelopment Howard wants to undertake will need to be compact, will need to be done for men and women, and will need to be slightly larger than Burr Gymnasium.

Consultants have recommended to Howard that they select one or more flagship programs, and that a state-of-the-art facility be developed at a size of 200,000 sq. ft. at a cost of approximately \$80 to \$100 million. Division I sports programs do not "live" well with campus recreation facilities, with the exception of some non-revenue sports programs like swimming and volleyball. The University may want to change the composition of the sports they sponsor, change the conference affiliation and competition levels in which they engage, and change the resource levels that are available to them.

In the near term, developing recreational facilities is a more achievable goal than developing an athletics complex.

Questions and Answers

Eduardo Ferrer questioned the wisdom of building a dormitory before the adoption of the full housing plan, and said that it was like putting the cart before the horse. It was explained that this sentiment was shared internally as well, and that there is pressure to take action to address some of the demand now before the full plan is ready. Commissioner Ferrer also asked whether the housing plan were building in anticipated growth in enrollment, and the answer was that the University awaits the outcome of the Presidential Commission on Academic Renewal to be able to determine the extent of growth in enrollment that can be anticipated.

Health Sciences Enterprise Strategic Planning Workshops

Robert Brannum attended both workshops held by the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs (a summary of those workshops is available electronically upon request). He described his comments to the participants in the workshop as follows:

- Most of the members of the health sciences enterprise felt that Howard's image in the community was a good one. The community has a different image of Howard than Howard has of itself, and that that image is not a good one.
- Howard University and the Howard University Hospital are not as involved in the community as they could be.
- In two or three years, Howard will not be able to get the support from the community that it needs because of the changing nature of her surrounding communities.
- In the immediate neighborhood, there are four or five hospitals that people can walk to and they will not hesitate to bypass Howard University Hospital.
- When the Haitian earthquake took place, the Haitian students at Howard reached out to him (Brannum) for help. He was able to get more cooperation from other non-Howard Universities than he was able to get from Howard. He spoke with President Ribeau about his experience, and was told that Dean Richardson was handling Howard's response to the Haitian crisis. Brannum was unable to receive any response from Dean Richardson.
- His experience with other universities (e.g. Catholic University and Trinity) is different from that with Howard. They each purchase tables for functions that he is affiliated with, while Howard does not.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

