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## *Overview of the threats on Burleith from GU's 2010 Campus Plan*

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Georgetown University (GU) presents both significant opportunities/advantages and problems/disadvantages to Burleith and other nearby communities. The advantages are many (e.g., a great educational institution and environment that attracts world-class scholars, public lectures, fine arts presentations). However, these opportunities and advantages have often been outweighed by serious problems created by the University. Tonight, we focus on these problems and potential solutions and ways to mitigate the problems created by the University.

So, what are the problems created for Burleith residents by our university neighbor? In a nutshell, GU students residing in our community live in circumstances that pose 5 interrelated threats to our community: threats to the health, safety, welfare, domestic tranquility, and diversity of all Burleith residents, including GU students. These problems are not new-- they are long-standing, serious, and chronic.

First, for the sake of clarity, we believe that the problems created by the University are not intentional—GU does not intend to harm its own students nor other Burleith residents. In fact, the University is aware of these problems, and has made efforts to mitigate them.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the University's efforts as well as those of the Burleith Citizens Association and other entities have been woefully unsuccessful in staunching these threats to Burleith.

We believe that it is within the University's power to minimize the threats to Burleith, but for whatever reasons the University has been unwilling to make the necessary commitments. Our efforts today, and in the future, are intended to help convince the University to do the right things.

**Threat Number One: Health/Crime/Domestic Tranquility.** More than 550 GU students reside in Burleith, many in group houses, perhaps as many as 200 such houses out of the total 531 in Burleith. On any given weekend, there are multiple parties going on in these group houses. It is not uncommon for more than 30 people to attend each of these parties and, unencumbered, these parties often continue until 2 AM, 3 AM....daybreak.

Binge drinking regularly occurs at many of these parties with attendant drunk and disorderly behavior (loud music, noises, and cursing; public urination, verbal and physical fights). These are **not** trivial behaviors--they are in violation not only of community standards but also of DC laws. The binge drinking threatens the health and welfare of community residents as well as that of the alcohol abusers. Neighbors seeking domestic tranquility are sometimes threatened by inebriated partygoers.

**GU's Role.** While the University strictly monitors and controls parties conducted on campus it exercises almost no control over off-campus parties. GU maintains a service, SNAP, which is supposed to respond to student drunk and disorderly behavior; SNAP has proven to be generally ineffective. With prompting from the BCA, the ANC, and others The DC Police Department actively responds to drunk and disorderly behavior in Burleith, often issuing multiple summonses on each weekend night...**and, yet, the problem persists.**

**Threat Number Two: Health/Safety/Housing/Diversity.** More than 200 of the 531 houses in Burleith are rented (rather than owner occupied). All rental houses are required to have a Basic Business License through the DC's Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to ensure health and safety of the tenants and community (e.g., have fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, meet building codes). An informal study conducted by the BCA indicates that only a small percentage of the owners of this rental housing have the required basic business license. Thus, these houses, many of which are occupied by groups of GU students) represent a threat to the health and safety of the student renters as well as their neighbors. Furthermore, some landlords fail to maintain these properties (leaking roofs, electrical and plumbing systems, yards) and fail to provide tenants with necessary equipment (lawnmowers, snow shovels).

**GU's Role.** In its 10-year plan, ratified in 2000, the University said that it would construct new residence halls for its students, and that this construction would produce a major decrease in students residing in Burleith. The University did construct the residence halls **but there was no attendant decrease in students residing in Burleith.** In fact, the opposite occurred-- there are now more GU students living in Burleith now than in 2000. The current 10-year plan calls for continued expansion in enrollment, **but with no increase in student housing!** It is apparent that GU sees Burleith (and other nearby communities) as a key component of its student housing plans—Burleith currently serves as a GU student resident hall, **a function that is to be greatly expanded over the next 10 years.**

We believe that as the number of houses rented by students increases from, say, 200 to 300 and more (41%-56%), the turning point will be reached—Burleith will no longer be a diverse community where families with children, couples, seniors, and students live together; rather it will become a student village. A student community or the long-standing threats to the health, safety, welfare, and domestic tranquility will be far worse than they are even today.

So, this is why we're meeting tonight. To ensure that Burleith residents are aware of the University's current 10-year plan, its inevitable consequences for our community, and to ask that you join us in our efforts:

- To get the University to take responsibility for the consequences of its 10 year plan,
- To work with the District of Columbia planning commission to force the University to
  - ✓ Become a better neighbor, and
  - ✓ Live up to the requirements for universities located in residential areas.