

Letters

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JHU, Notre Dame shouldn't use Charles as private road

As a resident of Guilford and a frequent user of Charles Street for work and personal reasons, I have been reading with great interest and growing dismay the controversies over the proposed Notre Dame driveway onto Charles Street and the redesign of Charles Street in front of Johns Hopkins University.

It continues a trend of local universities attempting to turn a public street into a private road for their convenience despite the inconvenience it causes to taxpayers who use and pay for those streets.

It started recently with Loyola having a traffic light installed in front of the driveway to Charles Street from its new athletic facility. I have never seen more than one or two cars come out of that driveway at a time, most of which turn right and are gone by the time the signal turns green for them.

This results in a lengthy red light for motorists on Charles Street who stop only to see that no cars coming out of the driveway. I have seen many frustrated motorists disregard this light. Why is this traffic light needed or present when Notre Dame's driveway across the street has gotten along fine without one?

I find Notre Dame's argument that it needs a new driveway just down from the Loyola light for emergency vehicles difficult to believe, given the fact it has gotten along fine without one for so many years. Convenience for Loyola is not an emergency. New driveways create new opportunities for accidents and injuries.

Johns Hopkins' (and the Baltimore Museum of Art's) attempt to funnel Charles Street traffic into narrow lanes with one lane in either direction will create serious traffic problems for the general public who use this road to commute to or to access the downtown. There are many city residents living in north Baltimore who will be inconvenienced so that these institutions can change a public road into a private drive.

If there is a safety problem, why does Johns Hopkins not build pedestrian bridges for its students similar to what Gilman, Bryn Mawr, Roland Park Country School, Boys' Latin and Loyola College have done?

With all the quality-of-life problems city residents have, they do not need local institutions (many of them non-taxpaying) imposing their will over public streets and making them obstacle courses for us to get to home, work or play in Baltimore.

John B. Sinclair

Guilford