


CITY OF CORAL GABLES
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

2011 NOV 21 AM 9:46 CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -**TO:** ERIC RIEL
PLANNING DIRECTOR**DATE:** November 14, 2011**FROM:** MAJOR SCOTT MASINGTON **SUBJECT:**
UBC/SOMERSET GRACE
ACADEMY/CHARTER
SCHOOL-POLICE
DEPARTMENT REVIEW

This past April, I drafted a memorandum outlining some considerations or concerns, from a police perspective, about what may be encountered should a significant number of students be permitted to enroll in a school located at University Baptist Church. I have attached my previous memorandum for reference. Today, the matters outlined in the April memorandum still have merit and should be weighted appropriately.

Since that time, the department has reviewed traffic studies provided by the Applicant indicating the number of students, and thus corresponding vehicles, which they feel would be tolerated by the environment. These efforts include contingency plans for the times that the staging environment for vehicles is full. I am of the opinion that these options are not viable, and I believe that the "contingency plans" shall become the daily occurrence. As such, they are not really contingency plans and Somerset is indicating that there is not enough staging to eliminate the risk that vehicles waiting to pick up students on the neighborhood streets.

Another concern is the over use of Cardena Street. This narrow and short roadway is planned to be the only entry and exit for school traffic, which may exceed the capability of the roadway. Further, the plan submitted by Somerset includes placing bicycle storage on the Cardena side. This certainly adds bicycle traffic to the already congested Cardena roadway.

Should the number of students at the school be increased, we will need to closely monitor the environment from the outset, identify concerns and develop plans to correct the situations long before they become the norm.

Attachment: UBC/Somerset Academy memorandum, April 12, 2011

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- MEMORANDUM -

TO: ERIC RIEL
PLANNING DIRECTOR

DATE: April 12, 2011

FROM: MAJOR SCOTT MASINGTON
SPECIALIZED ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT:
UBC/SOMERSET ACADEMY

As asked, this document provides some considerations or concerns from a police perspective about what may occur should a school with any significant number of students be put in place at University Baptist Church. Please keep in mind that it is a difficult matter to quantify exactly what may occur both at University Baptist Church and in the surrounding environment but let me try to paint a picture based on our experiences with other schools in the City of Coral Gables.

Vehicular Traffic to/from the school:

The roadways that lead to the school must be considered. Certainly Segovia Street is considered a main thoroughfare, but we cannot control that this is the only way that people will travel to and from the school. We must understand that Rivera to the south and Anastasia to the north will see an increase in traffic as well as many smaller arterial roads in the vicinity that lead in some way to Rivera, Segovia and Anastasia. Though the numbers of additional vehicles will be the same at drop off and dismissal, I expect that mornings will be most impactful as far as adding to back-ups.

Pedestrian Concerns:

At all schools, we find that students being dropped off and picked up always find the "path of least resistance" to include time and distance. Students and parents, or guardians, determine what works best for them as far as a point of departure from the vehicle and a meeting place for return. More often than not, this departure takes place in the roadway from whatever lane and direction the vehicle is traveling. Similarly, the pick-up place is somewhere nearby but out of the congestion caused by the others doing the same thing. (I will address pick up further in the next paragraph). These varied locations place pedestrians in the roadways, often between vehicles and out of sight of other drivers, causing significant hazards to the pedestrian's safety. We work tirelessly at other schools to combat this problem. I am aware that Somerset has proposed operational plans to deal with this, however, as the students evolve to higher grades and age these plans break down.

Staging at Pick-Up time:

All schools experience the same issues at pick-up time. Parents arrive and line up wherever they can and wait to pick up their child. This is probably our greatest concern and most difficult to manage. Past complaints, from most of all our city schools, are the same in this area. These complaints include; dead grass in front of homes, garbage,

blocking the right of way and at times, conflict between drivers and homeowners. Year after year, we attempt to be very aggressive at the beginning of the school year in this area in an effort to “teach the new comers”, but it is an ongoing battle. As we attract more schools, and as a result more students, parents and vehicles, this is a difficult battle to conquer.

With all that said, there is one more point of fact that relates to police. A charter school is not recognized by the Miami-Dade County Public School Board Police as an area of responsibility. As such, any and all police calls for service and follow-up investigation become the responsibility of our agency. We are here to service the community and we will always do just that. However, it is difficult to determine in advance the demand this may place on our police services.

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