



Coalition for Smarter Growth

*Choices for our communities
Choices for our region*

June 21, 2006

Chairman Carol J. Mitten
Zoning Commission for the
District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

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2006 JUN 26 PM 4:25

RE: New Baseball Stadium – Parking

Dear Chairman Mitten:

We are writing to strongly support requiring below-ground parking for the new Nationals baseball stadium. The city is making too large an investment for it not to maximize the potential for redevelopment and generation of tax revenue. Fiscal consultants consider redevelopment essential for justifying major public investment in private sports venues.

Above-ground parking consumes land which could otherwise be used to maximize income for the owners and tax revenues for the community. It would create dead spaces that would undermine activity on the streets and create personal safety problems, discouraging attendance at Nationals games. While wrapping above-ground structures with residential, office or retail uses can partially mitigate the problem, the constrained size of the units surrounding the parking structure reduces their marketability and chances of success. The construction of above-ground structures would also create a costly obstacle for future redevelopment of these parcels.

In contrast, below-ground parking allows landowners and the city to maximize the amount of residential, office, hotel and retail development. It allows for a vibrant streetscape and more people living, working and visiting in the area, enhancing public safety and game attendance. We agree that a great fan experience on opening day is important, but having vibrant ground-floor activity – stores, restaurants and bars -- is important for opening day and the long-term.

Charging market prices for the parking spaces and using the spaces for 24-hour shared use during game and non-game days could significantly support the costs of underground parking. Increased value from mixed-use development made possible by below-grade parking could also improve the financing of the project. As for safety within the garages, the parking should of course be well-lit, and would be monitored by attendants. With commitments to great urban design, permitting approvals can be streamlined to speed construction.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-22 Ltr.

EXHIBIT NO. 28

The Nationals Stadium and associated development are a 30 to 50 year investment calling for investing in below-ground parking We appreciate your help in maximizing both public and private investment in stadium-area redevelopment and for seeking to create a great, vibrant and revitalized neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stewart Schwartz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director