

Thank you for allowing me time to register my protest to AU's request to alter their parking permit from one level to two.

AU submitted plans and received permission to construct a single (one-level) below grade parking garage for 150 spaces approximately 2 years ago. The depth (height) of the parking garage was such that it could accommodate delivery trucks, full sized AU buses, and emergency vehicles. AU told the community that "a single level parking garage would not have much of an "environmental impact" and the site would remain as a "low use" site. They would create an "intense" situation with the Westover neighborhood.

Recently, AU made an independent decision to alter current plans (to double the parking) for a two-level garage, which will not accommodate delivery trucks, AU buses, and emergency vehicles. (Rather than go up or out, they would go down to accommodate their need for additional spaces due to their decision not to build Building A at this juncture) When this request was first brought to the local ANC, the ANC referred it to the BZA, Westover neighbors and ANC3D objected to this change.

Without regard to the approval process, AU has continued to excavate their garage down to two levels even though they were advised by the Zoning Commission that there was no guarantee that their exception would be granted. AU said they could backfill in a week or so, if the exception was denied. So significant delays are not really an issue.

Disturbance of the high water table has always been a Westover concern. Water flow interruption is not to be casually ignored. Water damage does not always appear immediately. The buffer between the edge of the garage and Westover is 65 feet. There are 30 homes that border that buffer. They are the homes most likely affected by the excavation of a deeper garage than was expected. Other homes downhill from the deeper garage could also be at risk as well. I would like to refer to you to review Tom Smith's letter, dated 1/22/15, to Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairman of the DoCZC.

The crux of this meeting is two issues. Will there be an impact from a deeper parking area, and does AU's decision invalidate the number of parking spaces originally approved? I believe the answer to both is yes. AU's short notice reduces the city's ability to properly evaluate the total impact of a deeper garage.

Please consider that the East Campus site was presented to the community as an environmentally friendly project. The one level garage was supposed to receive all AU buses and emergency vehicles. Now, the AU new garage plan can't accommodate them. Vehicles that were to have gone into the garage cannot. There will be 2 dorms, 2 Academic Buildings, the Campus Public Safety Building and Parking, and a Shuttle Stop. AU has an amazing shuttle service that runs at least 18 hours a day. It runs week nights until midnight and until 3 am on weekends. AU now wants to run their shuttle on the surface of the East Campus. Then why add parking spaces?

Times are different now in 2015. Every DC office and department involved with development is challenged with traffic congestion and ultimately parking. All are publishing papers and plans to reduce traffic as much as possible. The future of DC's development is the intelligent expansion of public transportation.

Isn't it worth noting
ZC Case No. 11-07C
Exhibit No. 73
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case No. 11-07C
EXHIBIT NO. 73

that after AU finishes this phase of the East Campus, there will be phase two, bringing more congestion to the neighborhood? Homeland Security is in the process of developing their own plans of expansion of their campus. It's easy to see that parking spaces are not going to increase because the city expects projects to offer shuttle services or public transportation to the metro. Commuter traffic coming from the suburbs is going to be horrendous soon. There's a Ward Circle Traffic report coming out soon looking for ways to reduce congestion. That report will be interesting if it's able to significantly solve traffic congestion.

It's surprising that American University, who has a great reputation in the community for doing the right thing, would ignore the future and add parking spaces when they already have a shuttle service running 18 hours a day that solves so many issues? When the permitting process began, there was a commitment from AU not to develop the East Campus to such a point that it would create an "intense" environment to its immediate neighbors Westover Place. That commitment seems to have been thrown out the door.

With this in mind, I hope the Zoning Commission can reverse its earlier permit, and limit AU to a single level garage with them placing as many spaces as they can. Loosing 20 to 30 spaces when there's a shuttle seems petty on AU's part.

Thank you for your time,

Charles Privot
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Btw – If you'll allow me, I have over 25 emails to submit from Westover neighbors who support my vote against the parking garage expansion.