

Campus Plan Meeting
January 26, 2010
Mary Graydon Center -- 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. 2001 Campus Plan Commitments (handout)
3. Facilities Priorities
4. Preliminary Site Selection
5. Other

The meeting was called to order by David Taylor, Chief of Staff to President Neil Kerwin.

AU representatives attending included David Taylor, Jorge Abud, Assistant Vice President, Facilities and Administrative Services; Jerry Gager, University Architect; Penny Pagano, Director, Community and Local Government Relations; Maria Pahigiannis, Projects Coordinator, Office of the President.

Materials handed out at the meeting are available on the Community Relations web page on the American University web site www.american.edu/finance/fas/campus-plan.cfm

David Taylor reviewed Campus Plan Commitments that were part of existing 2001 Campus Plan with the task force.

Facilities Priorities:

Jorge Abud reviewed the university's objects to have the Campus Plan reflect the goals that were identified in the recently completed Strategic Plan. New housing incorporates a need to improve the quality of student housing by detailing freshmen, improving the quality of dorms and meeting modest growth. Eighty percent of our dorms are traditional double rooms and the model for doing that is changing today.

We already have an existing shortage of 500 beds if you count the 300 students living tripled in rooms, and 200 students living in apartments in the Berkshire. We are looking at our overall need to be about 1,000 beds and that would include new apartment-style living. The Nebraska parking lot could accommodate 800-1,000 students. Housing needs to be 5-6 stories to meet these needs. We would also reserve space now for a Signature Building adjacent Ward Circle for the right thing and the right architecture to contribute to the university. Asked about total housing needs, Jorge Abud said AU would need about 1,300 new beds to meet student demand. Moving the WCL to Tinley would mean finding new space for those 500 existing beds at Tinley.

One concept for a buffer between development and the back of the Westover townhouses could be a row of similar townhouses (approximately 100,000 square feet) that could be used as AU offices.

We have talked about employee housing, Abud said, but that is not a high priority and we are not likely to pursue it here. Another need is for an Alumni Center with offices for our alumni relations offices and some meeting rooms for alumni coming to campus. Parking will go underground and we will assess supply and demand. The Nebraska parking lot holds 900 parking spaces and turns over on the average of two times a day.

Our transportation consultants are going to meet with DDOT about Ward Circle and crossing issues.

Neighbors said they were very uncomfortable with the prospect of 1,000 students “moving in with us” in the neighborhood. Others expressed concerns about many students crossing back and forth across Nebraska Avenue. Westover residents said they were sad and angry that AU that AU would propose any housing on the Nebraska parking lot and want housing to be clustered with other existing housing on the campus. They urged the university to go back and lot at other existing sites for new housing. Others felt the suggested townhouse buffer was overwhelming for Westover (149 townhouses). Others said the continuing expansion by other institutions including Sibley Hospital, possibly the Department of Homeland Security raise increased concerns about overall traffic and other issues. Others suggested that AU consider smaller buildings for dorms because they felt they were much more conducive to students living together.

Moving the WCL to the Tenley campus provides a building area double to what the law school has today, Abud said, and we have not yet gone through the process of designing anything. We are thinking about three stories, but that is just a concept at this point. There would be no housing here.

Task force members also asked what would happen to the current WCL. Jorge Abud said no decision has been made and that AU is unlikely to sell it.

Tenley neighbors also asked whether the Tenley site would be built out to its maximum with something else there in addition to a new law school. Abud said there were no plans for this in the future. Asked about the previous AU/ANC agreement with Tenley neighbors, Abud said that agreement ended with the new campus plan. Another task force member noted that the entire site is an historic site and that a nomination petition to designate the site is pending.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be February 23, 2010.