



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document

Alan and Amy Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance and Sports Center Annex Project

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0. Introduction

What is “Meltzer Center/SCAN”?

The Alan and Amy Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance (Meltzer Center) and Sports Center Annex (SCAN) are two new building projects planned as part of the Student Thriving Complex. The Meltzer Center and SCAN (which will house the Well-Being Commons) projects are identified as development sites 3 and 5 in American University’s approved [2021 Campus Plan](#), and are located near Reeves Field and Bender Arena.

The proposed Meltzer Center will be the first newly constructed athletics and recreational facility on campus in more than 30 years. This state-of-the-art competition, practice, and training facility will enhance the development of our student-athletes, ensure their success in and out of competition, and bolster the overall athletic and recreational experience for the entire AU community. The Meltzer Center will feature a competition gymnasium for the wrestling and volleyball programs, and new strength and conditioning, sports medicine, and locker room areas.

The new SCAN will primarily house Well-Being Commons and will prioritize and expand the critical student support services that promote and foster overall well-being. The Well-Being Commons will include the Center for Well-Being Programs and Psychological Services alongside the relocation of the Student Health Center. Co-locating these programs in an accessible and central place on campus, and incorporating academic wellness services, will positively impact the way students engage with key services that are designed to actively enhance and bolster their overall experience at American University.

SECTION I – Site and Exterior Design (SED)

1. Why is the building proposed for the given location?

The buildings are planned for the general locations (Site #3 and Site #5) that were approved in the 2021 Campus Plan. Refer to [Exhibit K in the 2021 Campus Plan](#). These uses were specifically sited at Campus Plan development Sites #3 and #5 to take advantage of the adjacencies of existing athletic and campus life facilities such as the Bender Arena and Mary Graydon Center. As set forth in the Campus Plan, new development in this area of campus will begin to transform what is now “back of house” and services areas into a vibrant campus destination, while maintaining substantial distances and appropriate buffers from neighboring residential properties.

2. Why is the building smaller than described in the Campus Plan?

While the approved 2021 Campus Plan describes certain aspects of each of the identified development sites, such as building heights, general location, bulk, and use, the diagrams shown in the Campus Plan did not, as clearly noted and discussed during the Campus Plan development and approval process, represent final building footprints. Details regarding building design, including the ultimate size of the facility, are incorporated in the Further Processing Application for specific development projects. During planning for the project, it was determined that both Meltzer Center and SCAN would not need to be as large as what was approved in the 2021 Campus Plan to effectively meet AU’s needs.

3. What is the setback from the University Avenue property line to the edge of the court area and what is the setback from the University Avenue property line to the edge of the building?

The setback from the University Avenue property line to the edge of the court area is ~112 feet at the longest distance and ~88 feet at the shortest distance.

The setback from the University Avenue property line to the edge of the Meltzer Center building is ~258 feet at the longest distance and ~198 feet at the shortest distance.

4. What will be visible from the neighborhood?

An [advanced imagery study](#) was undertaken to help understand what will be visible from various points along University Avenue looking towards the buildings, as well as multiple locations at or near the buildings looking towards University Avenue.

5. Will there be exterior fencing?

Exterior fencing is planned for the perimeter around the Health and Wellness Court.

6. Will there be green roofs?

As part of meeting AU’s commitments with respect to green building practices, including achieving a minimum of LEED Gold certification for all new campus buildings, green roofs are planned for both Meltzer Center and SCAN.

7. What will the exterior look like?

Preliminary exterior concept renderings are available to view at the [Alan and Amy Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance & the Sports Center Annex](#) Campus Plan webpage.

SECTION I – Site and Exterior Design (SED) continued...

8. Can the building be smaller?

As was described at the public forum held on January 26, 2023, the Meltzer Center and SCAN structures are smaller (in terms of both height and gross square footage) than what was approved in the 2021 Campus Plan. A more detailed comparison of the currently planned building size vs. approved 2021 Campus plan is shown on page 8 of the presentation given at the forum. A copy of that [presentation](#) may be found on the AU Campus Plan website.

9. What size is the building?

Meltzer Center will consist of two stories with a maximum height of 50 feet and include approximately 55,000 square feet of gross floor area. The SCAN will consist of three stories with a maximum height of 55 feet and will include approximately 37,500 square feet of gross floor area.

10. What will happen to the tennis courts?

The tennis courts are planned to be retired.

11. What are the dimensions of the Meltzer Center terrace?

The terrace is currently planned to be approximately 11' x 62'.

SECTION II – Noise Sources (NS)

1. What type of noise will be generated by the building?

The notable type of noise associated with the buildings themselves will be produced by mechanical and other equipment located outside of the buildings. Examples include air handling units and emergency generators.

2. What will be located on the roof of the buildings and what will it look and sound like?

There will be certain mechanical equipment located on the roofs of the buildings. Equipment selections, locations, and screening are in the process of being finalized.

3. What are the anticipated noise levels at the University Avenue property line?

AU is currently performing an acoustical analysis that will describe anticipated noise impacts in the vicinity of the University Avenue property line.

SECTION III – Lighting (LT)

1. How will light pollution be addressed?

Analysis and planning for addressing lighting impacts is currently underway. While final decisions have not yet been made, options such as directional light fixtures, occupancy sensors, and window shades are all being explored as ways to effectively mitigate any adverse lighting impacts.

2. What are the plans for exterior lighting?

The plans for exterior lighting are currently in the process of being evaluated and will be developed in collaboration with university and community stakeholders.

SECTION III – Lighting (LT) continued...

3. Where will windows be located and what is plan for addressing light coming from inside and outside the building?

Final window locations are currently in the process of being determined and will take into careful consideration the impacts on neighbors who live on and around University Avenue. Please refer to FAQ item LT.1 for more information on mitigation measures being considered.

SECTION IV – Landscaping and Buffers (LND)

1. What is the plan for tree removal, preservation, and replacement?

Tree removal, preservation, and replacements plans are currently being developed in consultation with university and neighborhood stakeholders and in coordination with the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) of the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT).

2. What is the impact on the buffer area between University Avenue?

Please refer to FAQ item LND.1.

SECTION V – Programming and Operations (PO)

1. What will be the hours of operation?

Hours of operation have not yet been finalized, but it is likely that the buildings will operate on similar schedules as other athletic and campus life facilities such as Bender Arena and the [Mary Graydon Center](#).

2. What will the access road be used for?

The access road will primarily be used by service and delivery vehicles. Additional service and loading details will be discussed with DDOT and will be reflected in a Transportation Impact Statement that will be developed as part of the Further Processing review.

3. Why is this building needed?

The proposed Meltzer Center will be the first newly constructed athletics and recreational facility on campus in more than 30 years. This state-of-the-art competition, practice, and training facility will enhance the development of our student-athletes, ensure their success in and out of competition, and bolster the overall athletic and recreational experience for the entire AU community. The Meltzer Center will feature a competition gymnasium for the wrestling and volleyball programs, and new strength and conditioning, sports medicine, and locker room areas. The following [link](#) provides additional information on AU's need for the project.

4. What activity is going to occur in the area closest to the neighborhood?

Programmed activity occurring closest to the neighborhood will primarily be associated with use of the outdoor Health and Wellness Court component of the Meltzer Center. The Health and Wellness Court is located no closer to University Avenue than the existing tennis courts. Examples of anticipated programming include stretching and strength conditioning, motion and movement exercises, and related recreational activities.

SECTION V – Programming and Operations (PO) continued...

5. How will the use of Reeves Field change?

No changes in use or activities at Reeves Field are currently anticipated in connection with the Meltzer Center and SCAN projects.

6. How will the building serve the public?

As part of the community engagement process associated with the planning for the Meltzer Center and SCAN projects, members of the AU project team seek to learn more about what types of neighborhood uses and benefits would be of interest to the community.

7. What activities are planned to occur in the 750-seat competition gym?

The main activities currently planned to occur in the 750-seat competition gym include wrestling matches, volleyball games, basketball practices, and special events. These are all activities that currently occur at Bender Arena.

8. Will there be food service at the facility?

Concessions areas are a common feature in facilities like this and AU has evaluated other existing campus locations in helping to determine whether this function is required at Meltzer Center. There are no other concession spaces within an approximate 1,200-foot walking distance of the planned building location. Moreover, the University's existing campus retail locations are staffed locations with limited evening and weekend hours. Given these two primary constraints, AU has determined we will be unable to meet concessions needs with services being offered in other existing locations on the campus. Although our analysis has determined we do need this type of space, the concession area at Meltzer Center will operate at a much smaller scale than what may typically be found in a facility of its size and use.

9. What is the concessions area at Meltzer Center and how will it be used?

This approximately 400-square foot concession area, located in the first-floor lobby, is intended to meet minimal needs for those occupants of Meltzer Center, and is not intended to serve as a destination for those who are not accessing the facility for planned programmatic uses. This being the case, AU is planning to implement a fully automated market vending concept that will provide bottled beverages, packaged snacks, packaged fresh food items, and limited game day merchandise for student athletes, visitors, and spectators attending sporting events. The addition of the automated market vending area operating model will also allow for the offering of services in the evenings and on weekends when the athletes, visitors, and spectators are present for events or practices.

SECTION VI – Loading, Parking and Circulation (LPC)

1. Where will spectators park?

No additional parking will be required in connection with this project. All proposed activities that generate demand for parking are already currently accommodated on campus, including visitor parking for these events that generally occurs at the Bender Area Sports Center Parking Garage.

2. What will the impact on pedestrian traffic be?

The 2021 Campus Plan emphasized strengthening pedestrian circulation throughout campus as a key priority, particularly with respect to improving conditions in and around buildings on the west side of campus. Development of Sites 3 and 5 will help reinforce pedestrian pathways and access routes, as AU begins to transform what is now “back of house” and service areas into a vibrant campus destination.

3. What are the traffic and parking impacts?

Please refer to FAQ item LPC.1.

4. How will buses access the building?

Buses are currently planned to continue using the current parking locations near Bender Arena.

SECTION VII – Construction Management (CM)

1. How will contractors access the site?

The primary campus access point to the site is planned to be from the Massachusetts Avenue entrance. Access may also occur from the Fletcher Gate entry at Rockwood Parkway NW. No access for building construction is planned from the surrounding neighborhood, including University Avenue. AU will work with neighborhood stakeholders to develop a Construction Management Plan as part of the Further Processing review and approval for the Meltzer Center and SCAN projects.