

AU Planning 101 Session “AU in Context of a Changing City”

THEMES & TAKEAWAYS From Table Discussions

On September 5, American University hosted a Planning 101 Session at which Colleen Willger, Associate Director of Neighborhood Planning from the DC Office of Planning, AU Chief of Staff, shared information about District planning in Ward 3 and how AU fits into the changes that are happening throughout Washington, DC. The session was attended by AU faculty and staff, AU students and alumni, and neighbors from adjacent communities. Participants were given an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions about the following question:

“As DC continues to change, what vision do you see for the area in and around AU?”

Below are the collective themes and takeaways from table discussions. The intention of the table discussions was to brainstorm and share perspectives. The sentiments expressed below are not agreements or conclusions from the session, but reflect varying viewpoints presented during the discussion.

Themes:

<i>Growth & Development</i>	<i>Tenleytown</i>
<i>Community</i>	<i>Transportation</i>
<i>Student Needs</i>	

Growth & Development

Proposed Vision: Preserving the residential neighborhood

- Hope for the university to enhance the quality of life for neighbors
- Hope AU develops in ways that preserve older homes

Proposed Vision: Demonstrating that AU has added value

- Several staff and community participants expressed an appreciation for campus, delighted in the vigor and excitement AU brings to the neighborhood

Proposed Vision: Intentional comprehensive planning

- One community member mentioned the difficulty of harmonizing development and university growth with the needs of builders and residents

A few under-utilized elements of AU campus were noted including the southside of campus and the Army Corps of Engineering space.

	<p>AU participants highlighted the university’s new consensus-building approach to campus planning through the AU Neighborhood Partnership.</p> <p><i>“[As a working group member], I have been impressed by how the university has responded already before the next campus plan has even come.”</i></p>
<p>Tenleytown</p>	<p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> A built sense of community and culture</p> <p><i>“There are many issues around connectivity among people. Lots of Tenleytown seems very sterile and not engaging. Tenleytown is not helping to build community.”</i></p> <p>One participant mentioned that Metro Plaza has good potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognition that Tenleytown could be more welcoming and attractive <p>Several community members agreed that providing more student housing near Tenleytown is a positive way of having fewer students in rental homes or other buildings.</p> <p>Another participant noted differences between catering to what AU students want versus Tenleytown residents.</p>
<p>Community</p>	<p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> Central gathering space(s) for the wider campus community (i.e. students, neighbors, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ideas for spaces included: A student-community center, an impressive library facility, a farmers’ market, a gallery <p><i>“Every year more classrooms are added when what is actually needed is more community space.”</i></p> <p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> Integration that brings a more robust relationship between university and neighbors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hope that neighbors become excited to be part of AU ● Participants offered various ideas for integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AU Arboretum as an opportunity ○ Invitation of neighbors to games and athletic events ○ Dog-oriented events inclusive of neighbors ○ More events like movie nights ○ A football stadium ● <u>Question raised:</u> How can AU be brought out to the community?

	<p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> More positive student-neighbor relations</p> <p><i>“When AU is in the community, AU can know more about the problems and issues with students and can build trust and connections.”</i></p> <p>Both university and neighborhood participants acknowledged strains in student-neighborhood relations (e.g. impacts of student conduct).</p> <p><u>Question raised:</u> <i>Would neighbors like to see more AU police patrolling in the neighborhood?</i></p>
Transportation	<p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> Increased multi-modal transportation in surrounding neighborhood (e.g. increase bike lanes and stations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encouraging students living in Tenleytown to use bicycle and walking paths to commute to campus <p><i>“As a student, I am excited about having alternatives to driving to campus.”</i></p> <p>One community member expressed a desire to understand transportation and urban planning in relation to neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concern raised: Lack of regulation and oversight of the scooters, as well as pedestrian and rider safety ● Concern raised: Impact of transportation such as Zipcars, etc.
Student Needs	<p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> Increased accessibility of services and amenities to students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hope for businesses and resources on campus that encourage students to be on campus longer ● <u>Question raised:</u> <i>How can students more effectively get to amenities and attractions?</i> <p><i>“AU is insulated. Students ask for access to affordable food - especially if living off-campus - closer to AU.”</i></p> <p><u>Proposed Vision:</u> An on-campus student center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognized need for large meeting spaces for both students and staff ● Suggestions to include conference rooms, theater, and ballrooms in a student center

	<p><i>“There’s an increased desire for more student engagement on campus. But if students stay campus now, there is nothing to do and no comfortable place to hang out on campus.”</i></p> <p>Some participants acknowledged requests from students for some affinity-based housing to live and create a sense of community (e.g. Black house, LGBTQ house, etc.)</p>
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