

## **Frequently Asked Questions American University Neighborhood Partnership**

(ver. 9/25/2020)

### **1. What is the AU Neighborhood Partnership?**

The AU Neighborhood Partnership (the “Partnership”) is a joint forum between American University and leaders in many of the community immediately adjacent to the University’s campus. The Partnership is focused on improving university/neighborhood relations through facilitated discussion, information sharing, problem-solving, and consensus-based decision-making. A primary objective is to create a consensus-based framework to adopt a co-signed 2021 campus plan.

### **2. Who are the members of the Partnership?**

The Partnership Steering Committee is comprised of American University (AU) representatives and representatives of community organizations and ANCs who were signatories to the March 18, 2018 letter submitted to and recognized by the Zoning Commission expressing the intent and vision of the Partnership. These founding members are the Fort Gaines Citizens Association, Spring Valley Neighborhood Association, Ward 3 Vision, and Westover Place Homes Corporation, and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 3D and 3E. Additionally, each Working Group Co-Chair is conferred a seat on the Steering Committee. In the case that a Community Working Group Co-Chair’s organization already has a seat on the Steering Committee, that organization determines who will represent them on the Steering Committee. AU select its representatives on the Steering Committee and the community organizations select their representatives on the Steering Committee. These members make up the Steering Committee of the Partnership charged with the overall management of the organization.

### **3. Are all organizations that represent citizens who live immediately adjacent to the campus members?**

The community leadership of the Partnership (Steering Committee and Working Group Co-Chairs) is comprised of the organizations signing the March 18, 2018 Zoning Commission letter and each individual agreeing in good faith to the Terms of Reference and Ground rules of the Partnership. Community members who express interest in participating in a Working Groups, should connect with the respective Working Group Co-Chairs to discuss the Terms of Reference and Ground rules which include group size and composition to reflect the surrounding community and the esprit du corps of the Partnership – a facilitated, consensus-based process.

### **4. How is the Partnership managed?**

The Partnership consists of a Steering Committee and Working Groups. The Steering Committee, composed of the Co-chairs of the Working Groups and other community leaders, provides guidance and direction to the operation of the Working Groups. The initial community Co-Chairs of the Working Groups were chosen by the Steering Committee. Subsequent community Co-Chairs will be chosen by the members of the Working Groups. The community Co-Chair of the Steering Committee is selected by the community members of the Steering Committee.

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### **5. What is AU's relationship to the Partnership?**

American University is an equal partner in the Partnership. University officials are members of the Steering Group and the Working Groups. The University has also provided funding to enable facilitation of Partnership meetings.

### **6. Does AU have any influence over who represents the community on the Steering Committee?**

No, each community organization chooses its own representatives.

### **7. What topics do the Working Groups cover?**

The current Working Groups address Transportation and Parking, Facilities Planning, Student Life and Safety, Engagement and Communications, and Data and Metrics.

### **8. Who can be a member of a Working Group?**

The Working Groups consist of American University staff and community members who are representatives of community organizations which are members of the Steering Committee as well as recognized community leaders in neighborhoods whose residents are impacted by the university and its operations. All members of the Working Groups, regardless of origin or affiliation, must agree to be bound by the Partnership Terms of Reference and Ground Rules.

### **9. Are any of the discussions within the Working Groups confidential?**

In most cases, the discussions within the Working Groups are not confidential, but members are expected to keep proprietary information confidential if the university requests for the group to do so or if there is a consensus among Working Group members to do so. Members of the Working Groups are asked to refrain from quoting, characterizing, or judging the statements/views of their fellow Working Group members or appearing to speak for the Working Group when discussing the Working Group's activities outside of the Working Group. Working Group members are encouraged to actively connect with their represented neighbors to hear concerns and views on topics to be addressed by the Working Group.

### **10. How do neighbors learn about discussions within the Working Groups?**

The Partnership Steering Committee Co-Chairs periodically share updates on the Partnership's work with other community-wide organizations such as the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) and neighborhood ANCs.

### **11. How are decisions made?**

To the maximum extent possible, decisions are reached through consensus.

### **12. What is the role of the facilitators?**

Facilitators help the Steering Committee and the Working Groups have productive discussions and make decisions. The facilitators will not influence the final decisions made.

### **13. What is the Campus plan and its process?**

Universities in the District of Columbia are required to develop a Campus Plan to encourage orderly development of the campus in coordination with the surrounding community with the intention of minimizing negative impacts on the community. Campus plans can run for 5 to 20 years. Currently, American University's plan is a 10-year plan adopted in 2011.

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### **14. What is the schedule for the next Campus Plan for American University?**

The University must have a new Campus Plan in place, after consultation with the community and approval by the Zoning Commission, by 2021. The university is scheduled to meet this deadline in an orderly fashion.

### **15. What is the relationship between the Partnership and the Campus Plan?**

One of the primary objectives of the Partnership is to work collaboratively with the University to help develop the next Campus Plan. Upon approval of the Campus Plan, the Partnership is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Campus Plan.

### **16. Can the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) be involved in the Campus Plan?**

The current Campus Plan approved by the Zoning Commission requires American University to chair a Community Liaison Committee as a means of working with the larger community surrounding the University. The CLC is expected to engage in discussions with the University during the development of the next Campus Plan. The Partnership's work on the Campus Plan is expected to enhance any resulting discussions between the CLC and the university regarding the Campus Plan.

### **17. What is the relationship between the Partnership and the Community Liaison Committee (CLC)?**

The Partnership is independent of the CLC, but there are many common members. The Partnership periodically informs the CLC of discussions within the Partnership.

### **18. Has the D.C. Zoning Commission approved the creation of the Partnership?**

The creation of the Neighborhood Partnership (previously termed the "Neighborhood Collaborative") was discussed extensively with the Zoning Commission most recently in Case No. 11-07G. Specifically, on March 12, 2018 ANC 3D and other Partnership members submitted a letter to the Commission (Ex. 72) describing the Partnership's structure, mission, and roles in relationship to the CLC. The following findings of fact and conclusions of law in the Commission's final order for 11-07G serve as a clear acknowledgment of the creation of the Neighborhood Partnership as consistent with the terms of the current Campus Plan:

- *"The University however needed no permission to launch the Neighborhood Collaborative, and did so. The Neighborhood Collaborative and its working groups address concerns of neighbors living adjacent to the campus. These concerns include issues related to: enrollment; student housing; facilities planning; parking; transportation; and student conduct."*
- *"the ANC raised no issues or concerns about the Neighborhood Collaborative and suggested that it complemented the community engagement activities of the University. The Commission found this advice to be persuasive in finding that the University was not in violation with either the letter or spirit of Condition No. 16."*
- *"The Commission finds the Applicant's community engagement efforts with the CLC to comply with requirements and its establishment of the Neighborhood Collaborative to further enhance its community engagement efforts."*

### **19. Whom should one contact for additional information about the Partnership?**

For more information about the Partnership, contact one of the following:

- Troy Kravitz: [3d02@anc.dc.gov](mailto:3d02@anc.dc.gov) (Co-Chair of the Partnership)
- Ed Fisher: [edfisher@american.edu](mailto:edfisher@american.edu) (AVP of Community & Government Relations, American University)