

DC Council Approves Parking Plan

Written by The Staff

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The DC Council yesterday approved emergency legislation that would build parking garages next to the new baseball Nationals Ballpark being constructed in Southeast along the Anacostia River, resolving a months-long deadlock with the Washington Nationals and putting the ballpark on track to open in 2008. The vote is seen as a key victory for incoming mayor, Adrian Fenty.

As [reported by the Washington Post](#) :

Under the plan approved yesterday, two three-story garages will be built just north of the ballpark, which will be near South Capitol Street and the Navy Yard along the Anacostia River. A two-story garage will be built south of the stadium.

The new plan could make it more difficult for the District to build a mix of condominiums, shops and restaurants next to the stadium, as envisioned by Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D). Council members said they had little choice, because the city is required to provide 1,225 parking spaces to the Nationals by March 1, 2008 -- or risk potentially severe financial penalties.

"The decision made not only allows the project to go forward without any further risk of damages or liability but also continues to encourage a lot of economic development in the area," Fenty said. "The land in question on the stadium site is a small percentage of the area around the stadium that is already being developed."

As [Tim Lemke of the Washington Times reports](#) :

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The garages are expected to cost \$32.9 million, about \$3.1 million less than what is currently budgeted for parking structures. Sports commission officials said the city was able to save money because the Nationals relaxed their requirement for 300 spaces at the south side of the stadium. The stadium construction team, led by Clark Construction of Bethesda, said it can build the parking more inexpensively now with only 130 space at the south. Clark is expected to sign a contract guaranteeing it can complete the work on budget and before April 1, 2008.

"I'm very happy that the final piece of the baseball stadium puzzle is now in place," said Bill Hall, chairman of the baseball committee for the sports commission. "Now we move forward with construction. It's going to be on time, on budget, and there's no stopping us now in terms of completing the stadium as promised."