

Comments of the Woodley Park Community Association

The Woodley Park Community Association offers these comments on the National Zoo's Facilities Master Plan alternatives presented at the May 22nd Alternatives Meeting and in its newsletter. WPCA is a DC not-for-profit membership corporation organized to maintain and advance the quality of the Woodley Park area and has approximately 700 individual members, all residing near the Zoo. WPCA commented on an earlier draft of the Plan, and will not repeat here observations made in that document.

Parking. The Zoo now has parking for 868 visitor vehicles, which does not satisfy current demand and which will become more inadequate in the future. According to the Zoo's Environmental Assessment, "It was determined that in 2007, there were 87 days in which the National Zoo closed its access gates during peak attendance hours due to lack of available parking" (103). 87 days is, of course, a majority of the days during the Zoo's busy season. The correct response is the Preferred Alternative's significant increase in the number of on-site parking spaces. There can be no justification for reducing that number.

Aerial Tram. Last year, WPCA expressed concern about the proposed aerial tram because of its proximity to neighboring houses on Connecticut and Cathedral Avenues. The Zoo's Environmental Assessment heightens those concerns, as it notes that its noise "might be perceptible to nearby residents at night" (61). It also suggests that the tram's gondola cars would be visible from nearby buildings, and, therefore, apartments in those buildings would be visible from the cars.

The proposed tram has three legs. It is the long leg — from the bottom directly to the top — that is the primary cause of concern. At the very least, that leg should be eliminated from the proposal.

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WPCA again appreciates this opportunity to comment on the proposals being considered by the Zoo and looks forward to working with the Zoo as its planning process continues.