

Longwood University to Build an \$18M parking garage, for events over the next four years

Longwood University moves to ensure more parking for events/faculty/staff/students as they build a seven-story parking garage.

By: Lauren Pallas
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On Thursday, September 28th, Longwood University held a press conference with spokesperson Ashley Schaeffer. The press conference was about a new parking garage being built at the start of this upcoming summer.

The new garage will be located at the intersection of Route 15 and Wynne Drive. There will be entrance and exit points located on Route 15. The Garage is set to hold 1,400 parking spots that will be distributed amongst the following, 1,000 spots reserved for event parking with faculty/staff/student options during business days. As well as 400 spaces for the students and faculty/staff to be split.

The new Garage will be built by the company Roadside and Harwell, they are making the new seven-story building. The total cost is estimated to be \$18,000,000 with each parking spot costing around \$13,000 to make. Schaeffer mentioned, "Each spot would be around \$12,900 but when you think of the steel and all the concrete it comes to \$13,000 which is not bad."

This money is set to be given by the Longwood University reserve fund and donors. It was made known by Schaeffer that this need for money to build the new garage would not come from the student's tuition. However, upon further investigation, room and board are separate from tuition itself, so there may be a chance of a raise in room in board in the distant future.

The parking garage is located on Route 15 and Wynne Dr, it is in the current location of a commuter parking lot that only students are allowed to park in. There have been complaints along the parent social media pages and among students that there is already little parking for the current student population.

This brings into question if Longwood has thought about letting the faculty/staff keep their pre-existing parking garage located under Brock Commons on campus as well as the other lots that only faculty can park in. The students can park in the new parking garage which would give 1000 extra spaces that the campus was lacking due to the day.

Schaeffer mentioned that there are currently 2,700 spaces available on campus for students and staff combined. The current student population counting undergrad and graduate students comes to 4,612 according to UnivStats, and the current employees come to 1,364 as of the last

school year. With these numbers alone it shows that there is not nearly enough parking on campus.

Therefore, Longwood published its master plan which is set to enhance the campus and figure out ways that could improve it for all pedestrians. With the new Joan Perry Brock Center that currently sits 3,000 people, there is a need for better parking for both students and visitors.

Longwood also must keep in mind safety aspects for the new garage. With Roadside and Harwell making this garage an eco-friendly garage by limiting lights and using more natural lighting to help with energy, the campus would be getting closer to being an eco-friendly campus as this building will join a few more that are eco-friendly.

With lights being limited and most events within the Joan Perry Brock Center being held at night there will be additional blue stations throughout the garage and leading up to it on the walkway. Schaeffer also wanted to highlight that Longwood students have access to the LongwoodReady app that features one-click calls to emergency services, friend walk, report a tip, and a campus map whenever needed and encourages students to download the app.

With the construction of the parking garage taking place from the end of the 2023-2024 school year and going through the summer of 2027, there will be frequent closers in town on Route 15 and Wynne Drive. There may be a need for Farmville Police to hire more people due to having to direct traffic and make sure construction runs smoothly as well as make sure there is little disruption to major traffic patterns.

Longwood is moving to more eco-friendly buildings on campus, but also enhancing the public view as they focus on keeping the Longwood aesthetic. Although it is a pricy updo for the campus, it has been proven that something needs to be changed and Longwood University is working swiftly to ensure that they are doing what is best for the students and community.

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