

Oakland-Wide Meeting, November 30, 2021

Wanda Wilson, executive director of OPDC, introduced the meeting and the featured speakers for the evening.

UPMC Bed Tower: Development Activities Meeting (DAM)

Featured Speakers: John Krolicki, Roger Altmeyer – UPMC; Kyle Weisman, Kurt Spiering, Bryan Cannon – HGA Architecture; Cindy Jampole – Trans Associates; Melanie Como Harris – IKM Architecture; Skip Graffam – ALSA; Michael Schesler – UPMC

Kyle Weisman gave an overview of the presentation, explained the project site, campus portals, and traffic patterns for the development. Kurt Spiering contextualized the development site. He emphasized the desire for green space in the development.

Bryan Cannon followed by discussing the architecture of towers in Oakland, hoping to continue patterns in their project. The limestone architecture and setbacks hope to mirror what we see in both the Cathedral and Litchfield Towers. He presented many renderings of the development and explained how they chose each project component holistically.

Spiering explained the intention of the Lifestyle Village in the development, with hopes to utilize that space for both community members and UPMC employees alike. Cannon described the outward-looking structure of the Lifestyle Village, including why they designed the structure with an overhang, the hope for a public art space, and how they chose building materials. Cannon also described the benefit of glass used in the development, stating that the building will pick up the color of its surroundings and change throughout the day.

Skip Graffam explained the landscape plan for the development. The project aims to introduce a significant new tree canopy, add native plant species to support local pollinators, and capture substantial storm water on site. He also presented on expected pedestrian movement during and after development and accessibility.

Mike Schesler talked about the construction necessary for the project, including lane closures and pedestrian redirecting. He told attendees that helicopter flight paths wouldn't change in the long term, but one path will be temporarily closed during the development.

Weisman discussed the project's sustainability goals, including plans to target LEED certification, reduce 40% of energy, advance and remodel facade performance to optimize natural daylighting, and optimize stormwater retention standards.

Cindy Jampole explained the traffic management plan following the parking study and traffic analysis done in the area and the anticipated vehicular movements for during and after the development.

Melanie Como Harris summarized the community engagement process for the development. She articulated the upcoming milestones for the project, including the anticipated Planning Commission briefing in early February and the subsequent hearing for late February.

Derek Dauphin of the Department of City Planning (DCP) clarified the DCP performance target process. He described the history of the program's establishment with a UPMC development in the eco-innovation district of Uptown and how the program operates. The process consists of a series of three meetings with the applicant, the first of which sets the stage for the project and the two subsequent set targets for sustainable goals and review those targeted goals along the way. The program's foundation is to align new developments with the goals of the 2030 district that The Green Building Alliance (GBA) manages.

Questions and Comments

Q: Will Fifth and Desoto still be a bottleneck area?

A: The biggest change on Fifth and DeSoto will be the implementation of the BRT station. Since the number of lanes on Fifth is being reduced with BRT, that is bound to have implications for congestion. However, motorists will soon realize there are new routes. I believe that this project will have negligible change to the congestion in that area.

Q: Would there be any assistance to move traffic when there are events at the Petersen Events Center?

A: We have not looked at Peterson Event Center traffic at this time. Remember that traffic isn't increasing but rather just moving around. A third or so of the traffic will be diverted to the new main entrance. Those cars are already in Oakland though, so it'll look a little different, but not much different.

Q: Do you have to pay a fee for road closures? Who gives permission for that?

A: DOMI gives permission, and there is a cost associated with it. It is associated both with the road that you plan to close as well as the duration of the closure, but I am not sure of the specific cost for our project.

Q: Where will UPMC buses park on Fifth Avenue?

A: No buses will park on Fifth Avenue.

Q: Will the shuttle routes change? Could full time residents use the shuttles?

A: No, the routes won't change at all. I can't give an answer on that today. We'd have to look at utilization of the shuttles for our staff and when we run them to see if that'd be feasible. We can explore it as a potential there.

Q: What size bus will be accommodated at the Atwood bus station?

A: Conversations with the Port Authority indicated that buses can be as large as the articulated buses, or the ones with the accordion-like structure in the middle. The bus station will accommodate two buses at one time.

Q: Why was glass selected? Was it because of cost?

A: As far as glass goes, it's not the cheapest option, but it's also not the most expensive. It was done to reduce the impact on the skyline and the mass of the building. The intention of the glass was to reflect what's on the community back into the community, and not have a strong character unto itself. The shape and form is as much about the function of the facility as it is about the curved linear nature of the building itself.

A: This project is going to be an international destination center for some of the most challenging surgeries that sometimes take weeks or months of hospital recovery time. There's a lot of research that suggests that people recover more rapidly and better if there are daylight views surrounding them. We wanted to mimic that in the development as a fundamental goal of having good patient experiences.

Q: How do we know that the building won't have a glare?

A: We've partnered with a team from Carnegie Mellon who are doing some of the best advanced modeling of how facade performance really works. We're iterating a large number of different scenarios regarding how we shade the glass so experiences inside the building are actually positive and not glare-filled. The shading fins that control glare coming into the building also limit the reflectivity of the surface from the southern sun. There will be more to report on that in weeks to come when we finish that analysis.

Q: Will the windows open?

A: The windows won't open, no. In order to provide the interior environment mandated by safety protocols, we're managing airflow mechanically. The energy performance goes downhill quite fast with operable windows.

Q: Could you compare the size of the building to the size of the Children's Hospital that was there before?

A: The building is approximately the same size and feel as the BST lab building further to the West. It's not quite as tall as Litchfield Towers. It's definitely taller than the old Children's building, but it occupies less ground.

Q: Will the building sway?

A: No. We have a remarkably robust structure.

Q: Will there be free parking for community members at the Lifestyle Village?

A: We're hoping that this building is a community asset. We're looking at a variety of things available in the building: a Starbucks, a restaurant, a community meeting room, a learning opportunity for healthy eating programming, and programming otherwise too. I can't answer the free parking question. We need to make sure that we provide enough parking for our patients and our staff. Could there be a discount on parking? That's an option. It's definitely something we can look into.

Q: Will there be wifi available at the Lifestyle Village?

A: I'm sure we'll have wifi there. I'm not sure how far it'll extend, but we can look to see if we can get some repeaters to extend that into the piazza space as well.

Q: What was the community engagement process for this Lifestyle Village? How were target focus groups chosen?

A: It started about three or four years ago with HGA. There were hundreds of staff involved, I know a lot of patients and patient families were involved in the process. We used our quarterly meeting of the community groups that meet with us to get ideas for and create the whole Lifestyle Village. If you want documentation of the groups we invited and meetings we attended, we're happy to provide that to you.

Q: What's the square footage of the restaurant in the Lifestyle Village?

A: 4,000 square feet. It will accommodate about 80 people.

3339 Ward Street

Featured Speaker: Tom Churchick -- Paramount Construction

Tom Churchick presented the preliminary stages of an office building purchase R.E. Development hopes to close in February, located at 3339 Ward Street. R.E. Development anticipates turning the office space into a 20-unit apartment building, which complies with the zoning district, OPR-D. Churchick showed meeting attendees the project's rendering, provided information regarding parking for tenants on a nearby property, and asked residents for feedback on the design. If the purchase proceeds, he will return to

Questions and Comments:

Q: How do you plan to charge for the parking available in the lot?

A: We haven't discussed in great detail how parking will operate, but I'll look into this further. On all of our existing buildings, we haven't charged for parking.

Q: Who do you expect to be your tenants? Will it be mostly students?

A: I think it'll be a mix of demographics. The intention is that they'll be more working people, but students I'm sure will be there too.