

## **Oakland Community Meeting**

**February 25, 2020, 6pm**

**Hosted by OPDC at 294 Semple Street**

**Presentation: Carlow Institutional Master Plan (IMP)**

**Presenter: David Meadows, VP Finance and Administration, Carlow University**

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David Meadows presented a slide presentation with background about the development of the IMP, additional feedback and guidelines from Department of City Planning, and a proposed public-private partnership (P3) opportunity. The IMP has evolved since campus plan in 2016.

See presentation posted to opdc.org webpage. Highlights: renovate existing buildings and construct new buildings on Fifth Avenue corridor. Average age of buildings is 50-plus years (with some built in the 1930s). One of the big things is reuse and redevelopment of St. Agnes school on Robinson Street, which will enable Carlow to serve more children.

P3 – partnership with Elmhurst Group to create an iconic brand on Fifth Avenue. To create more of a statement presence and identity. 300,000 sf for lease; 100,000 sf for additional health sciences graduate programs. There is a need for more spaces in these fields in the region. Land lease to Elmhurst. Currently working on a predevelopment agreement and building program. Project will encompass parking lot to corner with Robinson Street. Demolition of St Agnes center. Step down to Robinson Street to consider the transition to the West Oakland neighborhood.

Preserve and reuse St Agnes center and rectory elements and incorporate them into buildings on campus. Timeline – Fall 2024 is the goal. Fall of 2021 will launch two of the grad programs in temporary locations on campus.

Trans Associates conducting traffic analysis. Carlow is committed to eliminating impact on West Oakland neighborhood. Would not allow traffic coming out of development to go north on Robinson Street. It would have to go south.

Perry Funeral home – negotiating sale agreement now. Then will demolish the house; green the site in the interim. Potential playground in future that could also be used by neighborhood.

GNP parking lot – finalizing sale now. Trustees approved sale of both at January meeting.

**Q:** thank you for preserving the school. My grandfather was the builder of the church. They used the best materials. I am a lifelong Oakland resident. St Agnes is gateway for our community. What better gateway? Would hope in interest of community, reconsider demolition as you did with the school. Keeping elements is not the same as preserving the building – most community members will not see the preserved elements if they are kept in other buildings. Interested in what it would take to preserve the building. It is an iconic building in the neighborhood. It is beautiful and welcoming part of the campus now. Passionate about the former church. There was a time in our community where we held religious institutions to a higher standard and they protected our community.

**A:** understand your statement. The board of trustees deliberately discussed this issue for several years. It was not a decision they arrived at quickly. Commissioned studies – an independent analysis of cost to renovate the building that would serve in the same capacity as a private office building. Carlow cannot launch four new life science grad programs in a building that is not built for it. Cost to renovate systems in that building is astounding. Carlow uses it for functions, but generally not used. Trustees would not be able to create the type of development necessary for sustainability and progress for Carlow long into the future with that building in the footprint. It is situated directly in the path of where we need to put the new development. Can achieve the growth and enrollment in an environment where they are challenged by competing institutions. Over the 3 – 4 years debating this, the answer was we simply can't do it. The university cannot grow without these programs. The only space Carlow has to expand its footprint within its own boundaries is that space. The trustees made a reversal about the school building, there has not been a solution to figure out the church building. \$20 million renovation cost. Understand and hear concerns about the church building.

**Q:** Carlow would build the university building on the parking lot and Elmhurst build office building on remainder of site where St Agnes is located. Two different buildings?

**A:** don't know if they will be two different or if they will be integrated. Don't know yet.

**Q:** PHLF had offered to work with Carlow and Elmhurst to look at possibility of creative plan for reuse and incorporate into the new development. Have you given that any consideration?

**A:** yes, we have. Once the predevelopment agreement is signed (next month) university and developer can work with architects and preservationists to determine how elements of the building can be preserved. We won't get to that point until the agreement is signed.

**Q:** shouldn't that predate the agreement? As a condition of the agreement?

**A:** Elmhurst not ready to have the conversation yet.

**Q:** sounds like you are not open to preserving the building.

**A:** will speak with PHLF. Carlow is a mission focused school. Have never had the financial resources of other large institutions. The only way the campus development can happen is through the land lease to a private developer. Land lease the property to have the funding to develop the needed space. Everyone we have talked to has stated that project won't work with building in place. Carlow has the largest percentage of Pell –eligible students. Resources go to underserved students.

**Q:** Carlow mission focused. Also value driven. Sacredness of creation. Respect and reverence for creation. Church is a beautiful creation. Competitive environment is not the way to go. preserving the building is how you distinguish. Do something visionary rather than tearing down a beautiful church that people want to preserve. Forbes/Murray church built buildings around it. How the board rationalizes its celebration of liberal arts, history vs. technology and commerce?

**A:** disagree regarding your academic pedagogy – each program is infused with the liberal arts. The new programs will not be absent from liberal arts element. Correct your use of terms – it is not a church. It is a building that 25 years ago was a church.

**Q:** that is hard core coming from a catholic institution. It was built as a church.

**A:** diocese does not recognize it as a church -- it was deconsecrated by the Catholic diocese.

**Q:** Carlow would benefit from preserving the building. Cutting off nose to spite face.

**A:** responsibility of trustees to ensure viability in the long run. If there was a way to preserve and accomplish goals, they would do it. Just spent 8 million dollars on St Joseph's gymnasium.

**Q:** PHLF has offered to assist with creative design experts.

**A:** once agreement in place.

**Q:** you knocked down St Peters church to build the science building.

**Q:** growth for the sake of growth is losing proposition. No one ever satisfied, what is harmed is the community, human scale of the neighborhood, and neighbors.

**Q:** Perry funeral home, lot next to it?

**A:** it is part of the sale.

**Q:** will it be green space?

**A:** yes, it will be green space.

**Q:** what are your plans for the parking lot across Robinson Street?

**A:** resurface and landscape in city standards, potentially use for storm water management.

**Q:** anticipate variances for 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue project?

**A:** not as it currently is scoped because it is in the EMI zone and it is consistent with what current Oakland zoning allows. Each project would go through its own process for design review and approval.

**Q:** ballpark on cost?

**A:** not at this time.

**Q:** will Carlow apply for federal and state grants?

**A:** yes, absolutely.

**Q:** entrance to parking on the site?

**A:** fifth and craft. Loading box trucks would be between the new construction and St Agnes school building. Trucks would exit via Fifth Avenue and not traverse Robinson Street.

**Q:** timeframe for IMP at Planning Commission?

**A:** late spring or summer. Would come back to Oakland-wide community meeting hosted by OPDC for a development activities meeting prior to Planning Commission.