

## **West Penn Hospital Master Plan**

Community Meeting Notes

October 16, 2018

Taken by Christina Howell, Bloomfield Development Corporation

Attending: 26-ish people, councilwoman + chief of staff, city planner, 10 staff of WPH/AHN/Highmark; Presentation and most questions answered by Ron Andro, CEO of West Penn Hospital

### **Introduction to the Context**

A master plan is a zoning document that the city requires every 10 years

- It explores how the hospital will grow within its footprint

- It defines maximum envelope, not building design

EMI zoning area - Educational, Medical, Institutional, abuts Residential Multi unit zones

Showed map of what West Penn owns and what they lease

Some buildings are 107 years old, others are from 60s and 70s and need significant repair and improvement

### **Issues under Consideration**

One of largest concerns is parking of staff and patients in the neighborhood

Greening of campus

Stormwater - green roofs, reduce carbon footprint

Noise remediation

### **Proposal in 10-Year Plan**

Infill inpatient care inside the hospital - up 5 levels potentially

Mellon Pavilion torn down and rebuilt to create inpatient care - with an additional 3 levels added

Expanding parking garage to add 800 spaces - up 5 levels on Gross Street, pulled back from street as much as possible.

Outpatient care buildings would be two back to back - green space for 40 feet from street, 7 stories at highest point but stepped back so that 3 stories would be at Gross St level and then stepped back for top 4 stories

Add skywalk across Millvale from new ambulatory center to hospital

Parking & traffic study presented by TransAssociates

- propose signalize Liberty/Gross

- 2-way traffic until the end of their new parking garage

Build parking garage first as part of plan within 36 months to help parking congestion in neighborhood

25-year perspective includes building up Nursing School middle-rear portion and building up a section of the hospital on Mathilda across from Sunoco

Will have follow up meeting with community leadership and then possibly another meeting

#### Questions/concerns

1. Resident of Gross street across from new parking garage: will the street parking on Gross become permit only? West Penn would be supportive of extending permit only parking to that street. Made point that weekend staff are taking street parking
2. Someone taking notes? Will we be able to see them? Will presentation be public? Could there be a website where this is housed? Yes to all. Great neighborhood business district that dies out around West Penn Hospital, feedback is that there needs to be more. Answer is that parking garage would have retail along Liberty. Asked hospital to hire locally in order to keep local context
3. Transportation - 5 major bus lines that service most East end neighborhoods for employees to use. Are there transit incentive programs for employees? Yes, believe that there are preferred pricing for staff to lower the cost. Q: Very concerned about the noise from the heating plant - It emits a lot of noise over Gross - upgrade to that power plant - how will they mitigate the noise? A: putting in the middle and surrounding with buildings will deaden some noise, special walls to lower sound, new technology. Q: would HVAC be on roofs of new buildings or in power plant? Didn't know the answer. An employee answered that they would want to write a goal into the master plan of having those HVAC units in the power plant and install quieting measures.
4. Timeline for presentation to city council? Community engagement process? This is 3rd meeting with community. Will assess tonight's meeting to see if there's a 4th and then go to planning for a private session in November without comment, and then public planning session that happens after that allows public comment, then go to city council after the first of the year.
5. Councilwoman Gross - pointed out that there are no endorsements of this plan yet, everyone is here to listen. Ron clarified that no community group has endorsed the plan for the meeting and this is still very much draft.
6. Will the heliport remain on top of Mellon Pavilion building? Where does the helipad go during construction? Will stay on top of hospital, FAA flight plan is down Liberty and flight patterns wouldn't change
7. What is the distance between our house and the entrance/exit to the new parking garage (resident on Gross) - said it would be unacceptable to have right next to her house - A: traffic engineer clarified that this plan is just for massing and location, and that each building and project will have public input. Also did not get the flyer until Friday 10/12 - most people agreed.
8. Asked for clarification on Gross St 2-way plan: Would be 2-way for 268 feet then go back to one-way - expressed concern that with residential parking and a bus route that goes up the street, it's too small for 2-way traffic - traffic engineer talked about minimizing traffic into residential neighborhood to keep all parking garage people come out and go up Gross. Wants to make Liberty the main entrance and front of the campus. That would put people back onto Liberty. Mentioned similarity to Hyatt House parking as well as

Voelker development (former Mazda site at 5201 Liberty Avenue) under development now. Clarified that this is a concept included in the master plan but is not a set plan. When the design is proposed, then the solution would be completely designed and would go before the community for input and approval.

9. Have you considered linking the old garage to the new garage? Ron mentioned that they don't own the alley but if an opportunity came up where they could, they would be interested in changing that flow if the alley were attainable. If it becomes one full garage, the entrance could be closer towards Liberty Avenue, but need to not consider that as a current option because there is precedent both for and against the closing of a city street, as well the 2 remaining residences on that side of Gross Street use that alley to access their garages
10. Parking - new garage, no parking on that side of Gross up to the property that is privately owned. About halfway up Gross there are apartment complexes and residents use both sides of the street and there won't be enough parking there for the number of residents on the street.- A by Trans Associates employee - publicly available parking so can't be sure who, so recommended that residents advocate for permit parking in that area. If there is a combined garage scenario they may not need to remove any street parking. If not, there will need to be some street parking removed. Ron Andro asked aloud that if the garages were linked together, could they simply keep the Gross Street entrance and exit where it is currently. Trans Associates rep answered that it's very likely, or at the very least the entrance could be moved closer to Liberty than is proposed currently.
11. More questions about parking - Ron pointed out that the new garage would double the size of the existing garage by 700 spaces. Is there a way that the hospital could be a partner and add the missing 14 street spaces in the garage to partner with residents? Resident brought up weekend issue parking by nurses as well as evening shift parking that starts at 6:30pm as well - need to get permit parking area recertified so that evenings and weekends are enforced.
12. Resident was happy that more cars aren't being pushed onto Friendship and into the already congested area around the park - Ron asked if parking necessary along hospital side of park. Many residents answered that having the cars park there slows the car traffic down and removing it would make the road seem wider and increase speeds. Resident mentioned desire for speed tables around crosswalks but that they and new crosswalks have been denied. Ron said they're having the same problem on Millvale. Councilwoman offered that new dept sees things differently. Asked for BDC to re-submit request for crosswalk at Mend Way across Millvale, as well as across Liberty at Gross and to think about speed tables.
13. Issues with crosswalks around the hospital and how difficult those intersections are - talked about Millvale and Friendship park and no curb cut; no crosswalks at Gross and Liberty; could WPH push up their advocacy of the walkability of the campus - answer was yes, definitely want to do that and do any calming. 2 staff were hit on Liberty when crossing at Gross. Councilwoman pointed out that opportunity to increase walkability and welcome people into the hospital, but also how do we make the campus have clear

through-ways that aren't car-ways, a lot of people would be interested. Ron cited speed up Millvale Ave that is currently problematic

14. Helipad - new building is taller so that more residents across Friendship park will be able to hear it. How would they propose mitigating that? A- there is some structure that raises up and blocks sounds, and would be open to trying different sound deadening devices
15. Retail where? From Millvale to Gross on the first floor of the garage.
16. Existing garage getting new structural work, resurfacing, new lighting and new elevators next week
17. Ron - west penn very vibrant and very busy, doing well, and fortunate to talk about the extended plan
18. It's great to hear that a lot of growth is happening - in a neighborhood where there are a lot of pressures, people being forced out of homes, not enough food, no healthcare - what opportunities are there for the neighborhood to benefit from the growth of the hospital - what plans for housing, etc? A - recaps what they do now - gave space to community food banks and have new coolers and freezers. Also have prescription food program to help people meet nutritional needs and a nutritionist on staff and available. Health Bucks program discussed at farmers market. Talks about getting everyone to come to the hospital and the number of people being served. Talks about what can we be doing on affordable housing. Resident asked again for some sort of long term commitment around affordable housing and hospital stated that they are open to that idea. Ron talked more about grants to schools and bringing obstetric health to other neighborhoods where access to healthcare is low.
19. Person wanted to know what the hospital does for Garfield - talked about jobs and training program with BGC, on the job training, scholarships & grants to nursing school. Monthly holding at about 150 open jobs, will add 600-800 jobs over the next 10 years.
20. Will there be a third community meeting? Feels weird that neighbors weren't there. Resident suggested a zip code mailing that would announce a 3rd meeting in first week in November
21. Are there alternate ways for our neighbors to get feedback, such as survey or website? How can people give input on the plan outside of the meeting? If the goal is to hear from the community, there are other options.
22. Future of this area is the next generation, so making sure that the feedback is open in multiple ways.
23. Suggestion to look more closely at one section of the plan a little more closely instead of replicating exact same meeting. So maybe next meeting is drilling down on the parking issue along Gross Street - isolate one or two significant topics and clarify those specific
24. Street level of new mellon pavilion hospital building - can that become a hospital entrance plus street facing medical offices with entrances to activate - need ongoing discussion about whether that becomes the main entrance to the hospital.
25. Are they paving Gross Street? For councilwoman - eventually. Ron - public water authority wants to put a new line in on Millvale and will do that in April and will make Millvale one way during that work. Can they pave both at one time? Deb discussed how the pwsa is prioritizing areas for lead line replacement

26. Introduce Khanu the VP of Community Engagement for Highmark and offered that social determinants of health are what Highmark needs to focus on. Transportation, access to healthcare, food security, employment, housing, etc, pointing to pilot on the northside as an example of the partnership between the community and Highmark.