

Bloomfield Community Process Forum

**To Review the 10-Year Master Plan as Required by City Planning for any Organization
Operating within an Education/Medical/Institutional (EMI) Property Zoning Area**

September 12, 2017

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

West Penn Hospital School of Nursing

Developer: West Penn Hospital/Allegheny Health Network represented by Ron Andro, CEO

Architect: IKM, Ellery Harris, Architect

Traffic Engineer: TransAssociates, Cindy Gampole, Principle Engineer

Legal Representation: Reed Smith

Facilitator: Dept. of City Planning, Martina Battistone, Planner

Notetaker: Bloomfield Development Corporation, Christina Howell, Executive Director

Section I: Introduction

Welcome

- Martina, Dept. of City Planning
 - 3 Registered Community organizations in this area of Bloomfield: Bloomfield Development Corp, Bloomfield-Garfield Corp, and Friendship Community Group. In these situations, City Planning plans and facilitates the community meetings.

Section II: Presentation by Ron Andro

Ron Andro, CEO West Penn Hospital

Introduction

- Room for growth within footprint of hospital
- Want to be good neighbors serving the needs of the community
- Concerned about stormwater and greening, as well as parking
- Talk tonight about 10-year and 25-year plans

Expansion plan map:

- Expansion and modernization of outpatient facility by constructing a new building across from emergency entrance
- 2nd structured parking garage to be constructed in grass lot on Gross nearest current parking garage
- Hospital expansion inside the footprint of the actual hospital, as well as looking at Mellon Pavilion because it is not aging well nor serving the hospital's needs

Previous Outreach:

3 community meetings

Councilwoman Gross

Have met with all community groups who serve the footprint of the hospital

Concerns heard

Pedestrian safety on Liberty
Street lighting
Traffic patterns
Noise levels from power plant
Traffic flow on Gross Street
Transportation demand management
Landscaping at street level and amount of greenspace
Decrease employees parking on streets
Pedestrian safety on Friendship Ave

Structured Parking:

- Acknowledge concern of parking on streets
 - Offer bus to Lawrenceville lot, which is newly free to employees
 - Considering making Aspen Garage leaseholders only
 - Expansion of existing Liberty Ave. garage to add 507 spaces planned
 - Looking at transit and bicycle parking incentives
 - Want to expand Liberty Ave. garage onto Gross Street
 - Mindful of positioning of exits and entrances

Outpatient Care

- New facility would be two towers that would offer a walkway into the hospital as well as a walkway from the new garage
- One side facing Gross Street with main streetface on Millvale Ave.

Inpatient Care:

- Tear down Mellon Pavilion (currently outpatient care) in approx 8-10 years
- Create new inpatient care building fronting on Liberty
- Currently houses inpatient which would be moved to other new building
- Donut hole-like space inside of hospital footprint and looking to fill that with inpatient care

Power plant

- Control noise better by enclosing more of the equipment
- Upgrade equipment to increase energy efficiency and lessen noise

Gross Street

- Want to step buildings back from sidewalk
- No stark wall, blend into street and into neighborhood, not obtrusive
- Want to turn Gross St into 2-way street ONLY until their garage entrance/exit
- Want to add a traffic signal at Gross and Liberty intersection
- Looking at safety of other intersections that TransAssoc will comment on later in presentation
- Will add sidewalk along Mend Way

Millvale Avenue

- Adding two walkways over Millvale as well as likely removing the incline from the existing walkway above Millvale

Liberty Avenue

- More aesthetically pleasing - good architectural design
- Entertaining some retail along Mellon Pavilion and Garage on Liberty
- Want new audible crosswalk equipment

All over

- Acoustics can be improved and lighting can be enhanced without becoming intrusive
- Pedestrian safety
- Street level green spaces

25-year plan

- Expansion behind school of nursing
- Part of building along Mathilda that we would like to demolish and rebuild to use better

Section III: Question and Answer

[All questions answered by Ron Andro unless otherwise noted]

Q: Regarding mass transit, you have 3 bus stops on the campus, would you consider upgrading those bus stops with benches and shelters?

A: yes, we'd be happy to do that

Q: Would the upgrades to the power plant result in removal of current HVAC on top of buildings?

A: That's what we're thinking. Current systems are average age of 1980s, want to increase efficiency, remove all generators (around 60 years old), and really want to lower noise

Q: Are the two parking structures combined or separated?

A: We are on both sides of the alley [Corday Way]. If the city will grant this, we'd like to join the two garages to make flow better and access better. We would build a turnaround for neighbors and garbage/emergency service. This would allow the entrance/exit on Gross Street to be almost exactly where Corday Way is now and the two way traffic on Gross would only go to that point. And we would be able to push more people exiting onto Millvale.

Q: More greenspace with joining the garages?

A: yes, it can be pushed back from Gross sidewalk more and add more greenspace

Q: Where is the entrance to the Gross Street garage?

A: Where Corday Way exits onto Gross now. We heard concerns about the lights at the new garage, and impact from the exit. Want to make it only two way up to garage entrance. When we get to the point of designing each building or garage, there will be community meetings to review traffic flow, entrance location, lighting, materials, appearance, greenspace, etc.

Q: In a prior meeting you indicated that creating a 2 way street included eliminating parking on one side of Gross

A: Joining the garages and making Gross two way only to the garage exit will eliminate much less parking. If we eliminate any parking on Gross, we would compensate neighbors who are affected with free parking in garage

Q: How much is the parking garage used?

A: Almost full capacity daily. Heard how employees parking on streets is affecting neighbors. Lawrenceville lot now free and up to 240 cars being parked, increasing constantly

Q: How high will outpatient centers be?

A: 8 or 9 stories. There are 9 stories in the existing hospital structure.

Q: Will there be windows on Gross street?

A: probably. Concerned about reflection of building into neighborhood. Working with someone who explores that to make sure that sun and lighting don't go into neighborhood

Q: What is the construction schedule?

A: Don't have that yet. We would want to talk to neighbors again to better understand the impact

Q: Where is the entrance for new outpatient building

A: Elevated walkway from garage will be elevated above alley. Front door would be on Millvale, with a walkway connecting the new building on Millvale and the new building on Gross.

Q: What type of foundation system is planned? Concerned about vibrations from parking garage and construction.

A: Not there yet. This meeting is just for the master plan, to consider the maximum building envelope and square footage. When each building will be built, there is another community process around each building, the whole team will come back and present more detailed drawing on the proposed building to receive feedback. This covers only the amount of square footage intending to be built in 10 years

Q: For the new parking garage, how many floors?

A: 8 floors

Q: Any equipment on the outside of any new building facing the houses?

A: No, not the plan, want to keep all equipment in the power plant

Q: Will the small gravel lot on Gross beside of residential house be staying?

A: Probably take some, if not all of that lot to build garage

Q: Will the parking garage be right up against the house next to it on Gross

A: One part might come close, one part will be pulled back to create a cul-de-sac to support the two residences. Have expressed interest in purchasing these two residences.

Q: What are the big beige metal boxes that look like shipping containers in the alley making it difficult to navigate? Creating dangerous situation for neighbors

A: Will be gone by end of month, storing equipment for internal construction projects. Will look at that immediately to ensure clearance

Q: It is the city's alley?

A: yes

Q: Parking concerns on Gross - nightshift is from 7p-7a and employees park for free now on the street at night so how will you handle telling them that they now need to park in the garage and pay?

A: We would be endorsing a petition with the city to create 24-hour permitted parking on that street or in those areas. We have made our Lawrenceville lot free. Also looking at offering free parking to employees for nights and weekends since our garages aren't at capacity at those times. Also want to increase use of mass transit for employees.

Q: Could security monitor Gross Street to keep noise and illegal parking down, even for a month?

A: Let us think on this for a while since it is public parking and we don't have jurisdiction, but we will look at this.

Q: What happened to the parking permit process that a meeting was held about almost two years ago?

A (Deb Gross, District 7 Councilwoman): City planner for parking RPP areas left. City planning sent surveys to residents when renewal period came up, but now for the last two years there has been no one there at planning to deal with this. Working with other council districts to look at rewriting legislation, but administration is under-resourced. It has been proposed that parking authority will also take on planning responsibility, but they don't work for the city so it remains to be seen how that process could work.

Q: Still having hospital department employee huddles in the morning? Could managers reinforce the parking issues in those huddles?

A: Have brought that into the huddles and will continue to reinforce that. We want our employees to exercise community stewardship

Q: How many employees at the hospital?

A: 2200

Q: Projected # of employees after expansion?

A: Inpatient - add around 150 employees, outpatient - not sure yet but healthcare is moving more towards outpatient healthcare. Need further analysis, did projections on number of patients for in and outpatients growth but don't have those numbers handy, probably total (rough guess) of 200-250. Outpatient activity would bring more activity to the campus. Annually see 200,000-250,000 to campus yearly, and we expect that to go up but not yet sure how much.

Q: Will the helipad move?

A: Lands currently on Mellon Pavilion, flight path down Liberty in either direction. Would like to move helipad more central to the building. Before Mellon Pavilion comes down we need another place to land.

Q: Does West Penn still own building at top of Mathilda and Penn across from Cemetary?

A: No, not that I'm aware of. Most of our leased or owned buildings are on Liberty, Gross, Mathilda, and Friendship except for Lawrenceville lot and a research building near the train tracks on Gross that is currently for sale. [The building at the corner of Penn and Mathilda was built and is owned and operated by Action-Housing for low income veterans]

Q: What is the continuing process for this master plan?

A: Zoning for the hospital is EMI - Education, Medical, Institutional. What we are discussing tonight is only our zoned area, all of our changes are within this zone. We aren't currently looking at those properties outside of that EMI zoned area with this 10-year masterplan. We have purposely not done anything with the McKean parking lot, and there are 230 spots in Aspen Garage that are open to the public but we are considering whether that should be partially or fully leased to employees of the hospital. We want to be sensitive and taking our time in thinking about that in order to not displace users or residents.

Q: Plan for intersection of Corday Way and Gross Street?

A (Cindy Giampole, Trans Associates): Will be a 2-way section on Gross only between Liberty Avenue and entrance to parking garage. Trying to prevent penetration of garage users into neighborhood streets and move them onto Liberty. Can also come out on Millvale if parking garages are joined. That section of Corday Way will go away and new garage driveway will be located roughly where Corday Way is now. Current Gross garage entrance will be removed. If we don't do 2-way access to the parking garage on Gross, we think more people will turn down onto Gross Street and into the neighborhood.

Q: Did you say that the new parking garage would be open at night?

A: Yes, and the current garage is open at night and entrance is open 24-hours a day

Q: Would you consider providing free overnight parking for employees?

A: Yes, we are looking at that currently. We would rather have employees using our lots and we are looking at how to reduce the cost or make it free.

Comment from audience - would also make the employees feel more safe

A: Parking is part of their employee retention strategy as well

Q: In upgrading the power plant, my house is battered by the sound 7 months each year. Have you considered solar?

A: Yes, we are considering that. We are looking at everything available to lower noise and create efficiency. Hospital created in 1848 when there were different priorities, and now we want to have a low carbon footprint and don't think it's right to consume a lot of energy. More efficient equipment will lower noise (cited several 60-year old generators still tested weekly and are very loud)

Q: Smoking on Friendship park and neighborhood streets with cigarette butts everywhere, what are your thoughts?

A: It's hard for a healthcare organization to support something detrimental to health on its campus. The decision was by corporation that smoking is not allowed on campus. We promote all mechanisms for people to quit, but it appears that smoking levels may have decreased only slightly. Looking at bringing back an area for smoking because they're aware of how impactful this is to the neighborhood.

I would not be surprised if we bring the smoking hut back to campus. We can encourage people not to use the park, but they can choose to do it even with the smoking hut, and there needs to be a practice of enforcement by the city.

A: I work for a federal hospital and the system is looking at eliminating tobacco use during all work hours

Q: There are some hospital systems where you can't be hired if you smoke, and we're looking at all aspects at how to change the smoking culture and have to make some decisions.

Q: Is the installation of the new traffic signal on Liberty Ave and Gross St dependent on parking garage timeline?

A (Cindy Giampole, TransAsscoiates): That has to happen when we make pedestrian and traffic volume changes, and would be finished before the parking garage is finished.

Q: With the addition of new employees and more patients/visitors, any change/traffic control measures on Friendship?

A: Pedestrians are struggling to cross because there isn't good visibility for people in crosswalk. We have some thoughts on that but haven't worked on it yet. Safety of pedestrians all around our campus is an issue we're looking at.

A (Cindy Giampole, TransAssociates): Planning pedestrian upgrades completely around the campus. Recommending piano key crosswalks, also proposing red flashing light pedestrian controlled and crosswalk across Millvale to the emergency entrance with crosswalk. We've been asking the city for that crosswalk for a while and don't have an answer yet. Want to do that sooner rather than later. On Friendship cars are allowed to park right up against those crosswalks and feel that it would be better to remove some cars to increase pedestrian visibility. Excessive speeding also a problem.

Q: Intersection of Friendship and Gross, extremely confusing for pedestrians and cars.

A: I share your concern. Will do our part to continue petitioning

A (Deb Gross, District 7 Councilwoman): New Department of Mobility and Infrastructure, now have seven traffic engineers from one for the whole city. Starting to see more crosswalks and they have a backlog of requests citywide. Also starting to see more improvement in having traffic calming measures implemented. More people walking and biking and need to increase the safety.

Q: Is there a timeline?

A: Once plans approved, permitting, etc. 6 months construction of parking garage first. With zoning, then planning, probably won't start until late spring/summer 2020

Ron Andro thanks participants for attending and gives out email address for further questions or concerns: randro@ahn.org