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West Oakland Neighborhood Council
Tuesday, March 12, 6:30pm
Institutional Master Plan Presentation
Notes & Follow-up

Q. Are all of the areas marked opportunity zones going to have new buildings on them?

- No. those are broad zones that might have buildings, might be green spaces, might be improvements to buildings: it indicates something can happen there to move forward campus development.

Q. Does this plan propose to cut off/close down streets?

- No. There are a few instances in which we open streets, but none that we will close permanently.

Q. Is the building slated for the Crabtree site taller than Crabtree is now? (How much taller is it than Benedum?)

- About 3 stories taller, but there hasn't been a cap put on that height. You bring up a great point that I need to emphasize: even if these "boxes" that are pictured are approved in the IMP, each of the building projects will have to go through a plan development process with the City where we will need to come back for community input.

Comment: the difficulty with that is that Oakland right now doesn't seem to be capping building heights. Not knowing the total now isn't helpful. Pitt could join us in the process to put a stop to the "Canyon". They could support our concerns about building height. As development continues, Pitt could help to advocate with the community for height limits to reduce the canyon effect.

Q: Are there any conversations about development on the rooftops so they aren't idle spaces but something more attractive?

- Yes, in some instances (for example, on part of the building that will go on the site of Falk Clinic) we will have green roof.

One Bigelow

Q: How many stories is 170 ft.?

- It depends on the ceiling height of each floor. E.g. if the ceiling height is 10 feet, you need a few more for ductwork, and that gets you to the ratio.

Q: How tall is the Oaklander? Is the building being proposed taller?

- Yes, a little, but it used to be way taller, the community was concerned and the height was brought down.

Right now, we're saving sites. For each green area, buildings that are proposed on those go through a plan development process (each with community input) with the City.

Q: West Oakland isn't labeled on pages 14 and 22 of the Master Plan. Why was that?

- I apologize, that was an oversight.

Comment: That lends itself to the larger concern that Pitt is skipping over West Oakland.

Victory Heights

Salk Annex Building: (across from the UPMC parking garage), that existing building is not worthy of reinvestment. It will probably come down (if the dental school moves to Lothrop site)

Q: What makes a building designated as "not worthy of reinvestment"

- Each building has annual upkeep (carpet, maintenance, fire safety systems, air handlers) as code changes, they become more stringent and to update aging systems, it might not make sense to throw good money after bad. These buildings have one of two problems or both: the building didn't get periodic updates or the programs in that building have changed and the facilities no longer serve them (e.g. labs from the 1950s). We did an evaluation thru this master planning process of the facilities condition of each building. Some need to be replaced entirely.

Petersen Events Center improvements – small annex down a grassy slope. It's lower down the priority list, won't happen for a while.

Center for Athletic Performance will be built on the OC parking center: this building will replace all of the sports (gymnastics, cheer, dance, lacrosse) currently in Fitzgerald Fieldhouse (with the exception of Track) with new locker rooms, coaches offices, student athletes space, etc.

Q: What will happen with the parking? Where will people park?

- For each of these developments on the OC lot, there is planned, underground parking. The spots lost at OC will also be picked up at the Rec. Center. The city's goal to Pitt is no new parking. They want us to get close to net zero new parking. We are trying to comply with the city's expectation. That means that some areas of campus parking increase and some decrease, but overall the number of spots remains roughly the same.

The final piece is a **new indoor track** almost like an addition on the Center for Athletic Performance. Likely they won't happen at the same time because we can't afford to do them at the same time. It will house a 300-meter track with coaches offices, training rooms, there will be shared seating between the lacrosse fields, etc.

Q/Comment: It seems to me that everything we have a little bit of access to has been targeted as “not worthy” of further investment. Are we going to have access? Is there a plan to give us access to new facilities – like the location of new rec center – kids can’t walk there by themselves.

- Pool will remain where it is. Any access you have today we are committed to providing tomorrow. The facility location will change. We discussed that at the last meeting. It will now be located down where the O’Hara Garage will be. But, it’s a better, more modern facility.

Q: Are they going to offer a shuttle to us to help us access the new facility? Our kids can walk to the rec center on their own now.

- Each question and request is being written down and reported back.

Q: Did you say the track is going to increase in size? It’s going to re-size. The current one isn’t regulation size: the indoor one will be 300M.

A far-off project could be a **400 M outdoor track where the Sports Dome** is now.

There’s a **possible dome going where trees hall is located now** if the 400M outdoor track is built.

Q: Will we have access to the track?

- We need to find out.

Comment: I’m worried about what’s not being said. It seems like we don’t really know until it’s a done deal of what’s going to happen. I’m worried that some of these spaces [the ones that are going to be redeveloped] will be different than what we discussed.

- These pictures are early concept development, as plans naturally evolve things may change. The approved IMP will set the limits of development, then the City’s plan development project process for each site refines these concepts into what will actually be developed and assures no surprises for the community.

Q: How did you learn that the Rec. Center doesn’t work for students in that location? Did you do a survey.

- That’s a good question. Yes: we did a survey and found that students wanted a more central location for their Rec facility. Like many of our projects, the primary purpose of any facility must also solve other campus requirements.

Utility Plant

You will probably see construction on a new facility in front of the Cost sports center, just at the edge of where the OC lot is now. It’s a chiller plant. It will require construction. It’s a utility building.

Q: White dome: when was that built?

- We inflated it 2 years ago.

Comment: So you’re talking about demolishing it in less than 20 years.

- Yes. Its lifespan isn't projected to last more than 20 years.

Comment: I'm asking because when that was constructed, all of the construction trucks used Robinson. Would you take it down sooner? Would we live with those construction impacts again?

- Maybe sooner than 20 years. But, we learned a lot through that construction process about the negative impacts of construction and are committed to a better outcome

But, if we had to **relocate the dome, it would likely go where Trees hall is currently.**

The **Petersen Sports Center** will be getting an additional floor and a small extension. That project will be going in front of Oakhill later this month.

Q: How did they come up with the name Victory Heights?

- I don't know.

Q: How much control does the Athletics department have over all of the development?

- Athletics has to work within the broader campus development context. For example, the University is putting a utility plant in the middle of their development.

Q: Will there be signage throughout that says, "Victory Heights"?

- They've proposed some signage but that's up in the air right now. You will probably see something branded in Victory Heights that is part of the larger University/campus wide branding and wayfinding plan

Comment: That's the concern that we have because it's a rebranding of a neighborhood: of a community; it's tied to gentrification and displacement.

Q: How could that rebranding be mitigated? The branding is re-branding our community. It's a big deal to us.

- We will record and relay your concerns. Participate in the IMP process. Give us your input.

Q: There were lessons learned about construction: I want to hear what those lessons learned were?

- One example is that the contractor didn't carefully control entrance and exit to the site; dust wasn't kept down: cars kept getting dirty; Pitt had to tell the contractor to wash a lot of cars.
- The next lesson was about site control (caution tape and traffic cones does not a barrier make) better fencing.
- Finally, we learned how important it was to get out ahead of when these things are planned to start/finish. Now, there is a regular monthly meeting where Facilities talks to Community & Governmental Relations (CGR) each month to flag upcoming projects so CGR can flag potential community impacts and suggest neighborhoods to inform.

Comment: What has happened consistently is that large construction vehicles use Robinson; we flag them down, call them in, Robinson is not a construction route according to the city. There

has to be a sting for your construction vehicles so that they feel it: there has to be a very real stick.

Q: How are you (Owen) going to make that happen?

- I have to think about that. I can't stand here now and tell you, but I can think more about the proactive solutions. Penalty/bonus clauses are one way to do that. Also, better construction zone planning ahead of time – put it in the contract document, for example, outline the access route right in the contract. Also another tactic is to not award future contract awards based on past poor performance.

Q: Would they (the contractors) be receptive to hiring a person (maybe a neighborhood person) while the construction is going on to monitor Robinson and truck use?

[No time for answer, another question asked immediately]

Q. Does the University view us as someone they want to have a partnership with? For me, a partnership means that what you do is mutually beneficial. What I see here is that we come to these meetings, you hear what we want and it goes absolutely nowhere. When is it going to be our turn for you to listen to what we want?

- That was the purpose of last night – the opportunity to tell us what you think.

Comment: Just as we had an hour and a half for us to listen to you, I would appreciate an hour and a half for you to listen to us. We need less meetings like this one and more where we talk.

Request: We want a copy of who attended last night's meeting. And a copy of the notes that were taken.

Comment: The format of breaking us up made the environment hectic and confusing.

- The next meeting will focus on transportation. That will likely be more of a large group format.

Q: Has there ever been a neighborhood benefits meeting with West Oakland? We would please like to have a meeting like that.

Q: Within this process, when is the time when you respond to the concerns we raised? We need more time to discuss.

- We started last night's meeting with a review of where people could find the answers to questions asked, outstanding questions not yet fully answered, and where people could find the notes.

Comment: No. That's not what I mean. Where's the back and forth? We give you input, but there needs to be time to discuss. It feels like you are telling us what will happen, we say a few things, and it's recorded but not discussed.

Comment: It's great that you're reaching out to each of the neighborhood groups, but we need time to digest and discuss back with you again.

Comment: Not everyone is computer literate or has access to online. You need to find ways to disseminate the information in non-tech ways. Please distribute hard copy information that can be distributed to group leadership for further disseminations.

- Ok. We will. We will bring hard copies of this plan to Nadine.

Q: Is this the first time you've heard this feedback about non-technical ways of distributing information?

- No.

Comment: That's an example of the concern we're expressing. You hear these concerns, and record them, but they are not being addressed.

Answer: An example of us responding to this concern is that a comment was received during a master plan meeting about ensuring the formats provided are accessible to people with disabilities that use screen readers, so we tested our web site for the master plan to make sure it worked with screen-reader technology.

Comment: To this point of being responsive to concerns: As far as this Petersen Sport Center work happening soon, do not start this construction until you have a plan in place to control the construction equipment/trucks. For example, Who do we call when we see a truck on our street? How do we answer?

Q: Has the contract been signed on the Petersen Sports Center?

- No. No contractor contract has been signed.

Comment: You need a better communications strategy about who we can call when there is a construction impact. Share that communication plan with the community being impacted.

Request: We want a construction management plan to mitigate truck traffic and construction impacts before contracts are signed.

Comment: How about \$100 every time a truck goes down the street?

[Post meeting comment – We hear you: Owen has a meeting with his team this week to bring this construction traffic concern to the table to form a plan for community review and input on the site logistics for the Petersen Sports Complex (PSC) project and is committed to doing that for all major projects. Owen will work with Lina on the outcome of these discussions to bring information back on the PSC project.]

Is this the first time you're hearing about our problem with construction trucks on our street?

- Yes.

That's concerning. We've had Pitt at our meetings before to discuss this. For example, November 2016 5am. Truck driver died. Cars were the only thing that stopped the truck from barreling across Fifth. It was a catastrophe.

Comment: I could care less about your plan. I care about my community and the benefits that come to my community.

Q: It is 8:15: Have you presented everything on Victory Heights?

- I think so.

[Post meeting comment: Owen presented all of the slides he had on Victory Heights. He didn't get through the entire presentation due to the length of the discussion and we are sharing those slides with the Neighborhood Council.]

Comment: There were pictures shown in the presentation last night was not a part of the master plan or showed here today. The picture was not representative of what the neighborhood looks like. There were trees in place of the houses that exist in the neighborhood: the artists rendering screamed displacement – it's a clear communication point that says you aren't interested in our neighborhood.

- It's artistic license. It was unfortunate that the artists rendered it that way. That was not our intent.

Comment: You need to communicate to the artists that you need to picture the neighborhood - not just take artistic license and blur it out. This matters so that funders, city zoning understands the proximity of the building to residential areas.

Q: What about the plans to put a football stadium on campus? I have a picture right here that I brought up from online.

- There are groups out there that are a fan of bringing a football stadium back to Pitt. That's not our plan. It's not in our master plan.

Q: The current Athletic Director, when asked about this, has not closed the concern. She comes across as undecided.

- I don't know why the AD hasn't answered specifically, but from a campus planning perspective there's no room for a football stadium.

Comment: About the buildings that will go on the site of the Fitzgerald Field house – the scale to the neighborhood needs to be considered. The houses closest to that are only 2 stories. We do not want out-of-scale buildings next to our homes.

Comment: You need to increase the number of years you guarantee student housing.

- In this master plan we're increasing housing by 1,000-2,000 beds. We're going head to head with the Skyvues to do that. We looked at the demographics of students living on campus and are looking at ways to keep students on campus longer. We aren't the kind of institution that will go to an all-four year required on-campus living model, but we're increasing the number of beds.

Comment: Please share these notes with us.

- Thanks for having us and giving us the opportunity to share the institutional master plan with you. Our next public meeting will be around mid-April, date will be announced. We will share the notes and will come back with handouts. We will include these in the notes for the IMP process.