University of Pittsburgh
Institutional Master Plan
Planning Commission Briefing #4
6 April 2021
AGENDA

• What we’ve heard
  University responses to Commissioner's comments
  (proposed IMP modifications in *red italics*)

• DCP Staff Recommendations to Commissioners
  University responses to recommendations (proposed IMP modifications in *red italics*)
PC: Building Overhangs, generally

• What we heard
  How can we leverage widened sidewalks into University property by creating an overhang with the proposed building and still have it feel like public space?

• University Response
  We propose to add the following sentence to the Design Guidelines, Page 127 Alignments, Setbacks and Step Backs, end of the last paragraph, “Where appropriate, in order to accommodate additional sidewalk width, building design should consider overhangs with minimal to no structural impediments (i.e., avoid colonnades) to extend the public realm from the sidewalk to the building by setting back the first level of the structure.”
This comment was related specifically to two sites where this design guide is specifically applied due to the narrowness of these sites: Posvar Expansion (S. Bouquet St)(Lothrop St) Integrated Health Sciences Complex
PC: Contextual Height of Site 6C
Proposed Posvar Expansion

• What we heard
  Need additional information on the proposed maximum height of site 6C (120’) in relation to surrounding buildings and nearby residential areas

• University Response
  Proposed height is contextual – see existing building heights:
PC: Contextual Height of 6C – Residential Areas

- Site is bordered on all sides by EMI district
PC: Air Rights expansion of Site 8C

• What we heard

Need more information on how a development on the Victoria Site would be advanced with or without a tie to the UPMC owned plinth

• University Response

The site development, like all IMP sites, can only be applied to the ownership of the University, in this case the air rights above the existing UPMC Garage plinth, therefore the ground plane is not a part of the development except to a very limited extent at existing building entrances.

Our IMP acknowledges that, “Any change in ground floor use or suggested active use is subject to the acquisition and redevelopment of the podium by the University. If the podium is redeveloped, the street level façade shall be transparent”.
PC: Navigating Steep Slopes in the Medical District

• What we heard
  Navigating the terrain in the Medical district is particularly challenging due to the topography and could be better navigated through existing and new pedestrian bridges that have public access and wayfinding signage to guide as well as areas of respite up the slope.

• University Response
  We agree. Some of the proposed developments suggest potential new pedestrian bridges (subject to City approval crossing City streets). The University is committed to improving the wayfinding of the existing and potential new bridges. To this end, we propose to add the following on page 234 under the Urban Design Guidelines section at the end of the first paragraph, “The University intends to develop a Pedestrian Bridge Wayfinding Plan for the Medical District. The Wayfinding Plan will be required for the first project developed in the Medical District. The Pedestrian Bridge Wayfinding Plan will outline the publicly accessible connections of existing and proposed pedestrian bridges to assist with navigating the medical district slope.”
The University agrees that to advance accessibility where terrain cannot be overcome, areas of respite should be provided in the public realm. To this end, the University proposes two language enhancements to the IMP. First, on page 234 under the Urban Design Guidelines section at the end of the second paragraph, “Development within the sloped area of the Medical District should consider the incorporation of areas of respite in the public realm to easier navigate the steep slope.” and on page 80, Accessible Landscapes add a new sentence, “In these slope challenged areas, areas of respite should be considered to alleviate the difficulty.”
PC: Site 10A Development

• What we heard
  More information on the Frick Fine Arts Expansion

• University Response
  This site is technically not in the EMI district, it is in the Parks District and subject to 905.01 requirements. It was picked up as it was in previous IMP’s but the University now proposes that we change the site development to “advisory-only” subject to project development approval under 905.01 to avoid confusion in what standards may apply. To this end, we would add in bold text at the top of pages 262 & 263, “Advisory only – subject to requirements and Plan Development Approval under the Parks Zoning”
PC: Site Development approximate area

• What we heard
  What are the site development areas in the 10-year horizon?

• University Response – Approximate areas
  2A Information Sciences Redevelopment          21,400
  2B RA Lot Site                                 42,400
  5A Trees Hall Site                             223,700
  5B OC Lot Redevelopment                        309,900
  5C Petersen Bowl Infill                        126,700
  5D Playing Field Site                          454,800
  5F Fitzgerald Field House Redevelopment        156,500
  6C Wesley W. Posvar Hall Expansion             191,000
PC: Site Development approximate area

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6E</td>
<td>Hillman Library Expansion</td>
<td>79,100</td>
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<td>7A</td>
<td>Recreation and Wellness Center</td>
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<td>7B</td>
<td>WPIC Expansion</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<td>7C</td>
<td>Lower Hillside Housing</td>
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<td>8A</td>
<td>Scaife Hall Expansion</td>
<td>85,600</td>
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<td>8B</td>
<td>Integrated Health Sciences Complex</td>
<td>73,300</td>
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<td>8C</td>
<td>Victoria Hall Redevelopment</td>
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<td>9A</td>
<td>One Bigelow</td>
<td>93,300</td>
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<td>9B</td>
<td>O’Hara Student Center/ GSCC Redevelopment</td>
<td>30,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>9C</td>
<td>University Club Expansion</td>
<td>39,800</td>
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## PC: Site Development approximate area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9D</td>
<td>Crabtree Hall Redevelopment</td>
<td>101,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>10A</td>
<td>Frick Fine Arts Expansion</td>
<td>416,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>11A</td>
<td>Forbes-Craig Redevelopment</td>
<td>10,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>12A</td>
<td>Petersen Sports Complex Expansion</td>
<td>552,900</td>
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PC: Open Areas

• What we heard
  More information on open spaces

• University Response
  Existing sections of the IMP address public open space. In section 5.3.1 the University commits to:
  • Enhancing the pedestrian experience of campus and the urban context through sidewalk improvements, ground floor activation, and transparency
  • Establishing a network of barrier free routes, pathways, and facilities for use by all members of the campus community.
  • Promoting open spaces for both the campus community and surrounding neighborhoods
  • Inclusion of, and public access to, open space
PC: Open Areas - review

• Briefing #2 focused on developments on the Hillside that furthered the concept
  • Landscape character zones (slides 5, 6)
  • Tree canopy/replacement strategy (slides 7,8)
  • Accessibility within open spaces (slide 11)
  • Types of Open space (slide 15)

• The background to this slide is the Open Space Improvement Sites from pages 372-373

• The University will make new commitments to open space campus-wide similar to tree replacement strategies, optimizing on and off-site improvements to achieve goals
• The University is committing to enhancing these open space commitments by setting a goal to make or improve Public Realm Green Spaces (PRGS’s) as a part of the IMP

• PRGS establish a sense of place and are characterized as open spaces that are publicly accessible and open at reasonable times, frequently serving as a circulation path, having public realm elements such as seating & landscaping and being of high quality. They would include accessible areas employing universal design principles. In establishing a sense of place, these spaces are human-engaged and include biophilia principles with sustainable landscapes and are inclusive of reforested areas, bioswales, rain gardens, and other similar strategies that can serve to address both storm water functions and the enhancement of the aesthetic quality of the public realm.
The University has approximately 150 Ac of land, inclusive of buildings and building sites, approximately 80 Ac of this is open space. Of this 80 Ac, 14 Ac is PRGS. There is an additional 20 Ac not owned by the University but adjacent to campus of open space, 7 Ac of which is PRGS.
There is an additional 38 Ac of Pitt land and 8 Ac not owned by the University that could be developed to be PRGS. Some of the Pitt property will be future campus development that could include PRGS.
• The University will measure its contribution to PRGS’s over the 10-year development period reporting on campus developments as sites are developed. Currently, the University has 53% of its land in open space, 9% meets the PRGS standard.

• The University is committed to increasing its PRGS to 15% of its current acreage, including improving where permissible other land shown and improving existing open spaces to the PRGS standard.
Staff Recommended: The current IMP draft allows new accessory surface parking on sites 2B, 5A, 5D, 9C, and 10A in the 10-year development envelope. Staff recommends that all new parking (in the 10-year development envelope) be structured/integral to a building on sites 2B, 5A, and 9C, except where on-site ADA parking is needed.

• University Response:

922.04.6J allows up to 150 spaces in surface lots in the EMI zone. We are voluntarily proposing much less, site specific, parking to cover ADA and other accessory parking needs.
DCP Multi-site Staff Recommendation – Structured Parking

• University response:
DCP’s comment seeks to make parking exclusively for ADA; The University has needs beyond ADA parking in select locations based on proposed usage of development sites, their location on campus, etc. These uses range from service vehicle parking, clinical drop off/waiting, etc.

The University cannot agree to eliminating all surface parking, but these small areas will be subject to the overall goal of no net new parking. The following table shows the site and maximum potential numbers.
# DCP Multi-site Staff Recommendation – Structured Parking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Maximum Accessory Parking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Information Sciences Redevelopment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>RA Lot Site</td>
<td>up to 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Trees Hall Site</td>
<td>up to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>OC Lot Redevelopment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C</td>
<td>Petersen Bowl Infill</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D</td>
<td>Playing Field Site</td>
<td>up to 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5F</td>
<td>Fitzgerald Field House Redevelopment</td>
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<tr>
<td>6C</td>
<td>Wesley W. Posvar Hall Expansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>6E</td>
<td>Hillman Library Expansion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>Recreation and Wellness Center</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>7B</td>
<td>WPIC Expansion</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lower Hillside Housing</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8A</td>
<td>Scaife Hall Expansion</td>
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<td>8B</td>
<td>Integrated Health Sciences Complex</td>
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<td>One Bigelow</td>
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<td>9C</td>
<td>University Club Expansion</td>
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<td>12A</td>
<td>Petersen Sports Complex Expansion</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**Total Maximum potential Accessory Parking:** 45
DCP: Multi-site Staff Recommendations – Ground Floor Transparency

Ground Floor Transparency Staff recommends that ground floor transparency be required on sites 2A, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5F, 6C, 6E, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, 8B, 8C, 9A, 9C, 9D, 11A (in the 10-year development envelope) where active uses are suggested. As currently included in the IMP ground floor transparency is only required where active uses are provided.

• University Response:

The blue lines on development sites are defined as Active uses suggested as until design is started for a given site, it is indeterminate, thus the language for “where provided”.
DCP: Multi-site Staff Recommendations – Ground Floor Transparency

• University response:

The University is committed to providing ground floor transparency on primary frontages of development sites. To this end, the following language shall substitute for the deleted language in the sites, “Ground level facades along the primary frontage of a building (for example facing a Primary Street or open space) shall be transparent between 3’ and 8’ above walkway grade for no less than 60% of the horizontal length of the façade. Where residential, healthcare, or research & development uses are located on the ground level along a Primary Street, transparency may be reduced to no less than: (i) 15% of the horizontal length of the facade between 3’ and 8’ above walkway grade for residential uses; or (ii) 30% of the horizontal length of the façade between 3’ and 8’ above walkway grade for healthcare uses or research & development.
DCP: Site Specific Staff Recommendations – Site 5D Playing Field Site

Staff Recommended – Staff recommends a wider sidewalk on Robinson Street. Five feet is too narrow on a street that is a connection into campus with a sidewalk on only one side of the street. On the landscaping plans provided for the Chiller Plant, all the landscaping is being removed and replaced adjacent to the Plant. This is the only area of the site where there is a slope directly adjacent to the sidewalk. The remainder has a flat, grassy strip. Removing parking is also a possibility, upon further study of need and roadway width with the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure.

• University Response: We will provide a wider sidewalk
University response: The University will amend the Robinson St sidewalk table, Minimum required from 5’ to “10’***

*** sidewalk to be provided from Towerview Garage entry to beginning of retaining wall approximately halfway down Robinson St Extension (approximately at jog in setback)"

The University will also include street tree planting on this new walk (presuming no additional widening by removal of on-street parking)
DCP: Site Specific Staff Recommendations – Site 7B WPIC Expansion

- **Staff Recommended:** This is a challenging site, it is identified as low/difficult public realm quality in the IMP, but this project would allow a 220 foot tall building with no required stepbacks and an additional 585 cars on a pedestrian route into the Peterson Event Center. Limiting to only two curb cuts could still functionally be approximately 40 percent of the site, but we understand the need for emergency vehicle access and off-street loading access.

Staff is recommending the following language be added: "The University shall work with City Planning and Department of Mobility and Infrastructure at the earliest stage of building and site design to approve building placement, massing, and vehicular access (including curb cut width)"
DCP: Site Specific Staff Recommendations – Site 7B WPIC Expansion

• University response:

We appreciate the recognition that this current parking deck (and contemplated expansion) is in a tough position for development. The University agrees in general principle with the language but suggests an approach more realistic with the timing of developments and removing the word “approval” as it does not have applicable standards to judge approval. The University proposes to add the following to page 227 under Circulation and Access, “The University shall consult with City Planning and DOMI prior to finalizing schematic design regarding building placement, massing, and vehicular access (including curb cut width).”
DCP: Site Specific Staff Recommendations – Site 7C Lower Hillside Housing

• **Staff Recommended:** With a building allowable up to 200 feet and no step backs required, staff recommends a wider minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet.

• University Response: We will provide a wider sidewalk. The University will amend the University Dr. sidewalk table, Minimum required from 6’ to “8’” The next slide is a picture of the current site plan
Staff Recommended: This is a challenging site, the IMP identifies this area as a Low/Difficult Public Realm Quality and the University owns air rights, not the ground level podium. With a 260 foot structure permitted with no step backs or setbacks required, staff is recommending the following language be added: “If an air rights only building is developed, the University shall work with City Planning and Department of Mobility and Infrastructure at the earliest stage of building and site design to approve building massing and explore all possible options to improve the pedestrian realm on this site.
University Response:

We appreciate the recognition that is a challenging site in a difficult public realm. If the University does an air-rights only development as is contemplated in the IMP, there is no opportunity to improve the public realm beyond the small entrances at the ground level. The University proposes to add the following to page 241 under Height and Massing, “The University shall consult with City Planning and DOMI prior to finalizing schematic design.”