

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 06/24/2020)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: The Julian (419 Melwood Ave)	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Oakland Planning & Development Corporation (OPDC) Bloomfield Development Corporation (BDC) Baum-Centre Initiative (BCI) Polish Hill Civic Association (PHCA)
Parcel Number(s): 26-S-135	
ZDR Application Number: DCP-ZDR-2021-02539	
Meeting Location: Virtual, via Zoom (Oakland Planning & Development Corporation’s monthly Oakland-Wide Community Meeting)	
Date: April 27, 2021	
Meeting Start Time: 6:00 PM	
Applicant: Hudson Companies	Approx. Number of Attendees: 35
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning Board of Adjustment: Special Exception for Height (904.07.C.4); Special Exception for FAR Adjustment (904.07.C.5); Special Exception for Multi-Unit Residential (911.02) • Planning Commission: Baum-Centre Corridor Overlay District Project Development Plan (907.02.H.4; 922.13.C) 	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

- The project team from the Hudson Companies included Jonathan Hudson and Tyler Hudson. Also present were Kelley Coey (project manager), Rob Wilt (investment operations), and Jack Williams (architect). The Hudson Companies is based on Hermitage, PA, with an office on Pittsburgh’s South Side. The company specializes in the development of commercial, multifamily, and governmental assets.
- The site, located at 419 Melwood Ave, just north of Baum Blvd and next to the Porsche dealership, currently consists of a vacant industrial building of two (2) stories, which will be demolished as part of the project.
- The apartment building proposed is to be 10 stories: Floors 2 through 9 are to be all apartments, and the 10th floor is to be common areas such as a fitness center, lounges, yoga room, outdoor patio, and some apartments.
- The project is proposing 93 parking spaces as well as a bike storage area.
- The mix of units will be what the project team characterized as “typical” — a mix of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments.
- The project is to be located in the Urban Industrial (UI) District.
- The project team said that it would comply with all setback requirements and is not anticipating needing any variances.
- The project team showed a birds-eye view of the site, as well as some photos of the existing building from Melwood Ave and Gold Way.
- The project team showed its circulation and access plan, with parking garage access from Gold Way.
- The main pedestrian entrance is to be on Melwood Ave.
- The project team plans to open up a throughway between Melwood Ave and Gold Way for pick-up/drop-off of residents and packages. This throughway is also to serve as a loading zone for vendors and property operations.

- The project team showed exterior façade renderings of the east, south and west elevations.
- The materials proposed include masonry and brick, with metal accenting and plenty of windows. Balconies will be added to “texturize” the building façade. Materials on the front will be carried over to the side and rear of the property.
- The project team presented a perspective rendering from Melwood Ave, showing a glass area at the main pedestrian entrance. They noted that residents arriving by car and bike will typically use the garage off of Gold Way rather than the Melwood Ave entrance.
- Another perspective was presented showing the entrance with the private throughway next to it.
- A street-level view from Melwood Ave was presented, showing ombre art on the front masonry wall, which will be accented with cascading plantings. The project team said that they paid close attention to how the first level of the building will interact with the streetscape. They mentioned that there is currently no greenspace or trees in front of the existing property and that their project will add these elements.
- A close look at the ombre wall was presented, showing different masonry textures, colors, and finishes.
- Existing and proposed views were presented to show how the skyline around the vicinity would change with the new building. Views were shown from Baum Blvd and Craig St, Baum Blvd just east of Melwood Ave, the Luna Lofts at Craig St and Gold Way, Craig St south of the Baum Blvd intersection, and Baum Blvd and Melwood Ave across the street from the Porsche dealership. Three views were also shown from Gold Way.
- The project team outlined its preliminary development schedule:
 - Met with Councilman Lavelle’s office at an unspecified time
 - Pre-application meeting with City Planning on February 25
 - Oakland-Wide Community Meeting on April 27 (this meeting)
 - ZBA hearing anticipated in early June
 - Demolition anticipated to start in July or August
 - CDAP meeting anticipated in early August
 - Planning Commission meeting targeted for late September
 - Building permit desired by January 2022
 - Construction to begin in spring of 2022 (around April), with an 18-month timeline
 - Occupancy anticipated by the end of 2023

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>Will you include parking accommodations for On-demand services for pick-up/drop off by Uber/LYFT?</p> <p>Would you include accommodations for a bus stop/shelter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have adequate parking on site for all residents; also located in area where residents would not be allowed to use street parking (no permits for area) • Bus stop or shelter: with cooperation with the City and the transit authority; that conversation hasn't been had yet but would be open to be having those conversations
<p>Are you planning anything for a small grocery store? That seems to be a big demand item by residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There won't be any retail or shopping as it stands today; would be 100% multi-family residential
<p>Are there any plans to include affordable units?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, this is all market-rate apartments, so there won't be any affordable units
<p>The building is beautiful... congrats!</p>	

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
A 10-story building on this site will be several stories taller than everything else around it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the different perspectives, we really aimed to show that with the different elevations of surrounding properties, although taller than some neighboring buildings, the building is not out of context; hope those renderings were helpful in visualizing
With that much height, I feels like adding some affordable units would make a small dent in the revenue. Access to transportation and jobs at that location is very good	
I live on Melwood Avenue, and I'm concerned about how this development will impact traffic on our street. Since Melwood dead-ends, there's no other option for leaving the street if there's a bottleneck by the dealership or on Gold Way—do you care to address this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The signalized intersection at Baum and Melwood we have found to be adequate in turning movements and parking and traffic • We'll work closely with DOMI and Planning and Zoning with any concerns with traffic and will do anything we need to look at to alleviate that
This is Dan Wood from Councilman Lavelle's office. The Councilman asked that I express his support of this project. Hudson has kept him apprised of their development plans, the project is designed according to city code specifications with no variances required, and we believe it will be a positive addition to Melwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We appreciate the opportunity to continue these conversations offline, if residents want to put in their email addresses
I had a question from a resident who is not on the call about spillover parking and visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have on-site visitor parking planned; expect to have adequate visitor spots in the garage
The block after this proposed development is single family homes. Gold Way is technically a two-way street, but in terms of scale, it's essentially an alley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be a great deal of space for residents to pull in to garage without blocking Gold Way • We are having the private alley too that's not existing today between our building and Porsche; residents can use that to access our garage rather than spending more time on Melwood and Gold Way
What your slide neglects to show is that Melwood dead-ends about three blocks down; I'm not asking about parking so much as the way that added residents will add congestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this needs more clarification from us, we're happy to continue looking into that; we have not found that in our engagement thus far; we'll do everything we can to provide comfort there
The new private alley doesn't seem to have room for passing. I feel many may avoid using it for fear that they'll get caught up there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The alley is to alleviate congestion for loading, move-ins, pickups and dropoffs, Lyft and Uber, etc.
Honestly, if there's a vehicle delivery at the Porsche dealership, it can gridlock the street for seven minutes; it's hard to imagine that a 10-floor apartment building will have a negligible effect on the street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our market study is expecting that a lot of our resident base won't rely on car transportation and residents will work nearby and will use public transit, with a lot of walking and biking expected
Everything else around there is two stories. This building will loom over the area.	

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
I'd like to be contacted for follow-up	
<p>Would you include the Polish Hill Civic Association in this conversation? This site is closer to our neighborhood than it is to most of Oakland.</p> <p>I would also like to be on the mailing list</p> <p>Hudson -- is this presentation available to view again?</p>	<p>From OPDC: We will reach out to include PHCA in these conversations; presentation slides will be posted online on the Design and Development Review page; as we received updated info, we'll update the page there. We'll also work with Councilman Lavelle's office as well</p>

Other Notes

Planner completing report: Phillip Wu