

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW REPORT

Chatham University Zoning Map Change and Institutional Master Plan

DCP-MPZC-2019-00422

PROPERTY: Property generally Bound by Fifth Avenue and Wilkins Avenue, See Attached Map
PROPERTY OWNER: Chatham University
EXISTING ZONING: RM-M, R1D-VL, R1D-L, R2-M, and RP
Proposed ZONING: EMI, Educational Medical Institutional District
ACTION REQUIRED: Public Hearing and Recommendation to City Council
COUNCIL DISTRICT: 8; Councilperson Erika Strassburger
DATE: March 9, 2021
SUBMITTED TO: The Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. An application for a Zone Change Petition and new Institutional Master Plan was submitted by Rothschild Doyno Collaborative on behalf of Chatham University.
2. The Zone Change Petition is to change the zoning to Educational Medical Institution (EMI) from Multi-Unit Residential, Moderate Density (RM-M); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Very Low Density (R1D-VL); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Low Density (R1D-L); Two-Unit Residential Moderate Density (R2-M); and Residential Planned Unit Development (RP).
3. Notice of this Planning Commission hearing will be mailed to abutting property owners 21 days in advance and posted on the City Planning website. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, notices cannot be printed, distributed in person, or posted at sites. This alternative process is authorized by Pennsylvania Act 15 of 2020 (SB 841).
4. The 2018 enrollment at the Chatham Shadyside Campus was 1,850 students, with the growth goal of 2,400 students identified in the IMP. For reference, the IMP Best Practices Guide is intended for institutions with an enrollment of 5,000 students or greater.
5. This Institutional Master Plan includes four new developments in the 10 Year Development Envelope:
 - a. Athletic and Fitness Center 7,200 sf to 15,000 gsf addition
 - b. Building Connector 8,000 sf to 20,000 gsf
 - c. Buhl Hall and Labs 13000 gsf addition addition
 - d. Dilworth Residential Expansion 25,000 gsf addition

Other structures are proposed for changes of use and/or renovation.

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6. The Transportation Impact Study was approved by the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure.
7. This application is within the Registered Community organization area for Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition. A Development Activities Meeting was held on September 1, 2020 and a memo summarizing that meeting is attached to this report.
8. The applicant has updated the IMP to address issues raised at the briefing, including additional information on parking and transportation demand management and sustainability and energy planning.
9. An Institutional Master Plan is intended to permit flexibility for a large institution that is not possible on a lot-by-lot basis while providing a level of understanding to the public about potential growth of the institution. Provisions of the Master Plan are intended to:
 - (a) Protect the integrity of adjacent residential neighborhoods by addressing the impacts of institutional development on adjacent areas;
 - (b) Provide a growing and continuing source of employment which is easily accessible;
 - (c) Create attractive and efficient urban areas which incorporate a high degree of amenity;
 - (d) Protect sensitive portions of the natural and man-made environment which are potentially affected by institutional development.
10. As per 922.05, the review criteria Planning Commission uses for evaluation of a Zoning Map are:
 - (a) The consistency of the proposal with adopted plans and policies of the City;
 - (b) The convenience and welfare of the public;
 - (c) The intent and purpose of this Zoning Code;
 - (d) Compatibility of the proposal with the zoning, uses and character of the neighborhood;
 - (e) The suitability of the subject property for the uses to which it has been restricted without the proposed zoning map amendment;
 - (f) The extent to which approval of the proposed zoning map amendment will detrimentally affect nearby property;
 - (g) The length of time the subject property has remained vacant as zoned;
 - (h) Impact of the proposed development on community facilities and services; and
 - (h) The recommendations of staff

The applicant has provided a written response to these criteria which is attached to this report.

FINAL MOTION

That the Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh **Recommends Approval** to City Council of Zone Change Petition DCP-MPZC-2019-00422 to rezone 27 parcels associated with the Chatham University Campus from Multi-Unit Residential, Moderate Density (RM-M); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Very Low Density (R1D-VL); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Low Density (R1D-L); Two-Unit Residential Moderate Density (R2-M); and Residential Planned Unit Development (RP) to Educational Medical Institution (EMI) and **Recommends Approval** to City Council the Institutional Master Plan for Chatham University dated March 2021.

WITH THE CONDITION:

Applicant shall continue to meet with the Murray Hill Avenue residents to resolve issues brought up during the meeting including traffic patterns, buffers, the treatment of the three single family homes, and the inclusion of the Murray Hill Avenue edge in the plan.

SUBMITTED BY: Kate Rakus, Land Use Policy and Code Implementation Coordinator

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 4/18/2019)

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

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: Chatham Institutional Master Plan	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Trans Associates, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition (SHUC), Residents, Department of City Planning (DCP)
Meeting Location: City of Pittsburgh Virtual DAM	
Date: 09/01/2020	
Meeting Start Time: 06:30 PM	
Applicant: Chatham University/Rothschild Doyno	Approx. Number of Attendees: 26

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.

Creation of Institutional Master Plan (IMP), Changing Zoning to EMI from RM-M, Master Plan development in order to do so with Community feedback from Neighborhood Organizations including: Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition (SHUC), Shadyside Action Coalition (SAC) and Woodland Road Association (WRA). 10 year projection to Expand campus footprint, increase by 240 dormitory beds, 100 faculty and staff, 550 students and 11 parking spaces.

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Would it be possible to add a grass/planter/tree buffer between 5 th avenue and the sidewalk?	As we get further in the design process we can look into that, looking to make it pedestrian friendly and considering the pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
While working on Fifth Avenue have you considered adding Bicycle lanes on fifth. It would be cheaper to do it now rather than in the future. I understand it would be just a short stretch on Bicycle lanes on fifth. It would be cheaper to do it now rather than in the future. I understand it would be just a short stretch, but one has to start somewhere.	5 th Avenue functions as a primary arterial/state route so it is outside the prevue of this study, we are in support
The reason you do not [have] many bicyclists, is because the Campus is not friendly to bicyclists. Narrow road. If you make it more friendly you will see more.	Looking to add additional bike racks to the university and the travel demand manager will handle this issue.
Although PennDOT owns, you can currently consider bicycle paths on campus and widening sidewalks. n campus and widening sidewalks.	Thank you for your comments and feedback. Thank you for your comments and feedback
How does tree of life enter into the plan?	We are partnering with them and working with them separately.

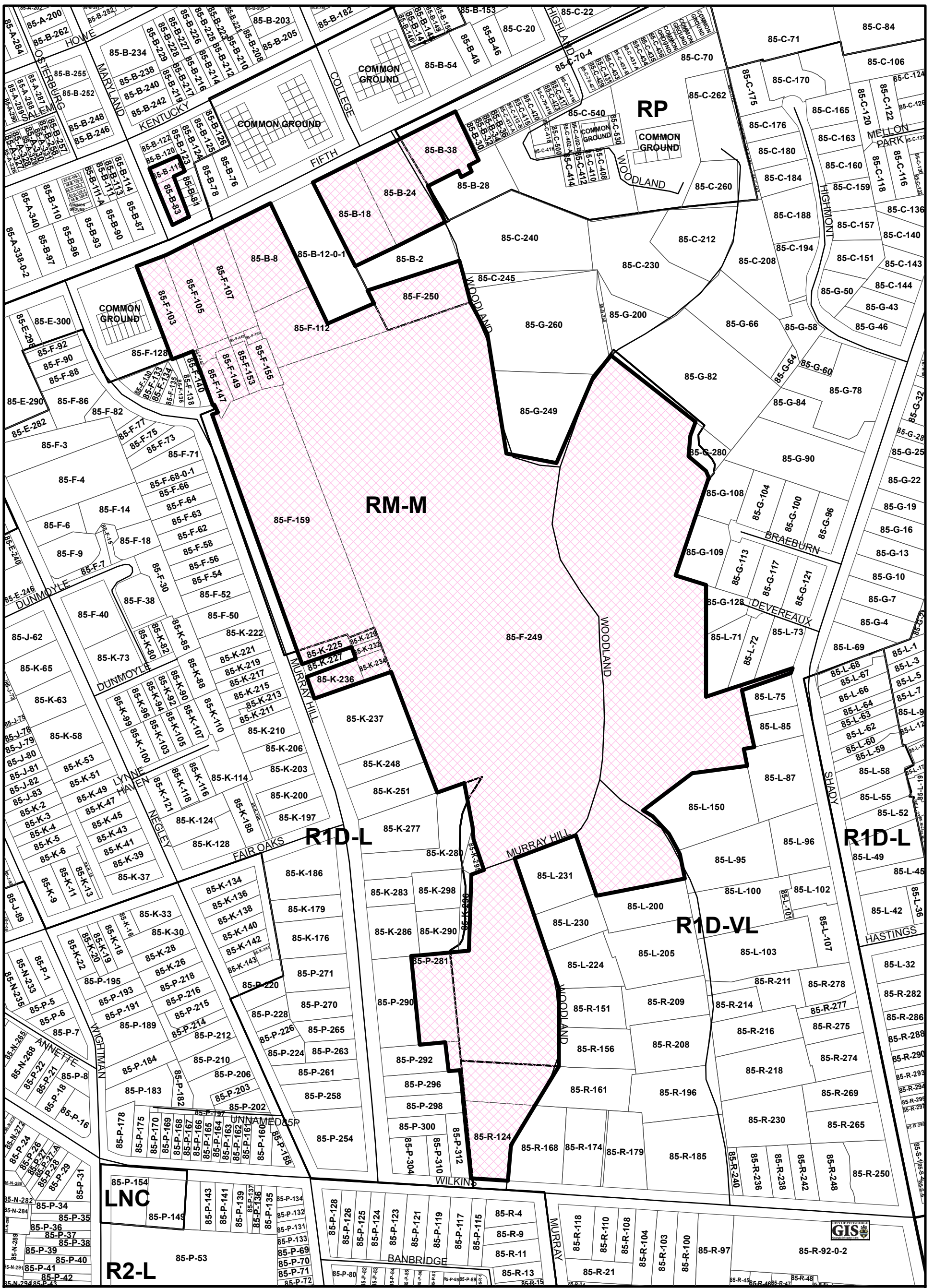
Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Is there resistance from the city [and/or PennDOT] to a traffic signal at Wilkens and Murray?	We collected the data required by DOMI, but based on the evaluation it does not meet the requirement for a traffic signal, but a pedestrian or Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon(RRFB) signal is recommended and meet the criteria.
Is there a flashing beacon anywhere else in the city as an example?	Close to Duquesne University on Forbes Avenue coming off of the Liberty Bridge (exact installation), S. Braddock Avenue to Frick Park, and Liberty Avenue in the Strip District (exact installation)
I noticed in the master plan that Chatham has appropriated the homes on Murray Hill Avenue – 1163, 1165, and 1167. These are part of the historic district. What will be done with these	Maintained as Single-Family Homes facades, used as Offices, and programing potentially. Specified uses are currently unknown. 1 st and 3 rd houses Chatham owns and faculty members typically lives there.
What is the traffic mitigation plan for Murray Avenue?	There is no anticipated change on Murray Hill Avenue. No additional measures proposed.
Hi I live on Murray Hill across from the library and parking lot, I'm concerned that the traffic survey underestimated the current and future impacts on that street, for example when evening classes end, swarms of cars leave at the same time, if you add more graduate students and faculty, where will they park?	There is no anticipated change or increase in use on Murray Hill Avenue as it is used today. The way it operates now is the way it will operate in the future. The growth will be 100 Graduate students over 10 years so slow growth and primarily on other parts of campus. Majority of growth has been in the Eastside building in the last 10 years, substantially increased square footage and etc. To occur there in the next 20 year horizon. Online student growth to mitigate this as well.
What does the current zoning not allow that you currently want to do? And while the current plan says that setbacks and building heights would be used under the master plan, how could that change in the future once the master plan has been approved and zoning changed?	EMI zoning allows you to align with the vision of the campus, increasing transparency, which the plan gives a good sense of what the plans are for the future. Dormitories are not allowed with the current RM-M zoning. EMI would allow for a process that allows for the intended changes.
What are the requests/restrictions in building heights and compatibility?	Look to the document online, specifically the Character Districts for contextual districts.
What is the plan for tree preservation?	Member of American Association of Arboretum and Botanical Gardens. Have a gardening staff and arborist that keeps trees on campus. Recognized as a national tree campus for the 5 th year. Have lost a number of large trees in the last few years due to storms illnesses reluctantly. Section related to Environmental Protection, with a map that identifies trees.
Murray Hill also gets the brunt of service traffic in the middle of the night, in violation of city ordinance, will anymore dumpsters or service vehicles that use the parking lot and loading dock be added?	Apologies, we instruct these guys not to do that and for some reason we have too go back and tell them again, due to staffing changes or other unknown reasons. There are no new dumpsters scheduled to go behind the library.

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>Providing a winding bike path would reduce the climb and encourage the use of bicycles rather than cars, I.e. less parking needs.</p>	<p>ADA accessibility issues due to the challenges of the grade/sloped /narrow campus(topographic issues). Woodland neighbor association value the narrowness. Student safety is an issue and we would like to be more bike-friendly.</p>
<p>Thank you for your time and although I have some concerns, I love living by your beautiful campus.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>

Other Notes

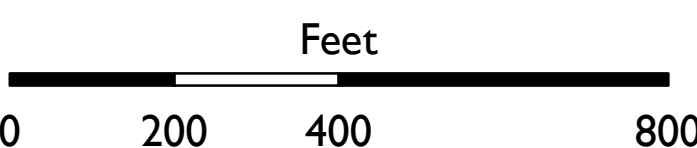
N/A

Planner completing report: Ose Akinlotan, Planner



DCP-MPZC-2019-00422 Chatham University Institutional Master Plan and Zoning Map Change from Multi-Unit Residential, Moderate Density (RM-M); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Very Low Density (R1D-VL); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Low Density (R1D-L); Two-Unit Residential Moderate Density (R2-M); and Residential Planned Unit Development (RP); to Educational Medical Institution

- Streets
- Project Area
- Parcels
- Zoning



**BEFORE THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH
PLANNING COMMISSION**

In Re: Institutional Master Plan and) DCP-MPZC-2019-00422
 Zoning Change Petition)
 Chatham University)

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Chatham University (“University”) requests: (1) Institutional Master Plan (“IMP”) approval and (2) to change the Zoning Districts for 27 parcels to Educational Medical Institution (EMI) from Multi-Unit Residential, Moderate Density (RM- M); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Very Low Density (R1D-VL); Single-Unit Detached Residential, Low Density (R1D-L); Two-Unit Residential Moderate Density (R2-M); and Residential Planned Unit Development (RP) (collectively “Application”). As set forth below, the Application complies with all of the applicable Review Criteria.

I. The Application’s Compliance with the Rezoning Review Criteria

1. The Application is consistent with relevant adopted plans and policies of the City, including the Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan V3, City of Pittsburgh 2030 Challenge, PWSA’s Green First Plan, and the Port Authority’s Bus Rapid Transit Plan. On-going University initiatives and recommendations within the IMP that align with adopted plans and City policies in the areas of energy, building efficiency, transportation, and sustainability. *See* Code § 922.05.F(1).

2. The Application promotes the general welfare of the public by strengthening and preserving a private open space that serves as a regional destination and an amenity to surrounding neighbors. The University provides tours of its unique Arboretum and welcomes visitors to campus through its events and programming. The IMP further defines and

preserves campus open spaces and view corridors that enhance the character of campus and its role in promoting the general welfare of the public.

Additionally, the IMP provides for the widening of the sidewalk along Fifth Avenue, new streetscape, pedestrian improvements to traffic signals at Maryland and Highland Avenues, and pedestrian crossing improvements on Wilkins Avenue at Murray Avenue. The streetscape and intersection improvements improve convenient access to campus from both Fifth Avenue and Wilkins Avenue. The proposed IMP improves accessibility across campus through building additions with elevators to traverse steep grades.

Finally, the IMP is internally focused with growth and development located at the campus core/quad area. The internal focus creates a vibrant campus environment while buffering adjacent neighbors from activity to maintain the residential character of the neighborhood. The University promotes the welfare of the public by maintaining and preserving residential properties at campus edges along Murray Hill Avenue, Wilkins Avenue, and Woodland Road so they will remain assets to the character of the neighborhood and the Murray Hill Avenue Historic District. *See Code § 922.05.F(2).*

3. The University is a college campus with a range of academic buildings, dormitories, and administrative office spaces. Many of these building with great character, charm, and value are not residential in nature and therefore not compatible with the residential, multi-family, moderate density (RM-M) zoning district. By contrast, the EMI District is intended to: (1) accommodate educational uses within the urban context; (2) promote and enhance the development and expansion of educational uses; and (3) minimize adverse impacts that can result when institutional uses are located near neighborhoods. *See Code § 905.03 A.* Here, the proposed rezoning of the several and disparately zoned residential parcels to EMI is

clearly in accordance with the intent and purpose of the Code. The IMP addresses all of the purposes of the EMI District. *See* Code §§ 922.05.F (3) & (5).

4. The University is comprised of many charming, small-scale buildings and open spaces that add character and value to the surrounding neighborhood. The IMP is focused on preserving and leveraging these assets to elevate character through the renovation of existing buildings and maintenance of the pastoral open spaces. *See* Code § 922.05.F (4).

5. The Application has the support of the property owners along Woodland Road. As recognized by the Woodland Road property owners, the Application was designed with the goal to enhance the campus as a community asset with no detrimental effects on nearby properties. With a focus on leveraging existing assets, the 10-year development envelope includes renovating existing buildings and only modest additions to a few of the buildings. The development focus is on the interior of campus, and the elements that affect the perimeter of the campus are aimed to enhance the overall experience of students and neighbors alike: improvements to the public realm and pedestrian crossing along Fifth Avenue; improved parking and traffic management; and improved pedestrian crossing at Wilkins Avenue. Further, open space buffers and limiting the use of perimeter buildings address neighbors' concerns. Residential properties within the Murray Hill Historic District will have compatible uses, and will continue to abide by the requirements of the District. *See* Code § 922.05.F (6).

6. The University has remained in operation while existing within residential zoning (predominantly RM-M). The school was founded and expanded as conversions of estates and homes into educational use, and this legacy zoning has remained during the University's history. As a fully established University, the entire campus now fits squarely within the intended purpose of the EMI District. *See* Code § 922.05.F (7).

7. The proposed development will have an overall positive impact on community facilities and services. Campus facilities—with modest expansion planned within campus—will continue to provide many benefits to the community, including open park space and cultural amenities. The most significant improvement will be in the public realm of Fifth Avenue, including improvements to pedestrian crossings. An additional pedestrian crossing improvement is planned for Wilkins Avenue. Continued and improved transportation demand management and parking management aims to decrease the number of student and employee commuters, even while projecting modest increases in the total number of employees and students. This should reduce the vehicular activity and parking associated with the University on the surrounding neighborhood streets. *See Code § 922.05.F (8).*

8. The Application has been reviewed by City Planning and the Application the University has revised the proposal to address the review comments where necessary. *See Code § 922.05.F (9).*

II. The Application's Compliance with the IMP Review Criteria

9. The IMP was designed with the goal to enhance the campus as a community asset with no detrimental effects on nearby properties. With a focus on leveraging existing assets, the 10-year development envelope includes renovating existing buildings and only modest additions to a few of the buildings. The development focus is on the interior of campus, and the elements that affect the perimeter of the campus are aimed to enhance the overall experience of students and neighbors alike: improvements to the public realm and pedestrian crossing along Fifth Avenue; improved parking and traffic management; and improved pedestrian crossing at Wilkins Avenue. *See Code § 905.03.D.1(a).*

10. As a university, Chatham offers a range of employment opportunities, both for students and non-students, with job growth following student growth. The campus is well-served by public transit routes on Fifth, Shady, and Wilkins Avenues; students and staff can ride transit for free as part of the Porth Authority's U-Pass program. The University's own shuttle system connects campus locations and helps to navigate the topography within the Shadyside campus, and the real-time Shuttle Tracker helps riders plan their trip. *See* Code § 905.03.D.1(b).

11. The proposed IMP creates attractive and efficient urban areas, which incorporate a high degree of amenity. Located within a neighborhood, the grounds of the University's park-like campus are open to the public, with access at multiple locations along the perimeter. The significant open space and high-quality tree canopy cover (as a registered arboretum) is used by many people in the surrounding neighborhoods and beyond.

Culturally, the University offers many other amenities—from a coffee shop and art gallery, to venues where community groups host lectures and events, lifelong learning courses, and summer camps for kids. Sports, theatre, and other events are held on campus and are open to the public. Four dedicated centers focus on community outreach and involvement: the Rachel Carson Institute (environmental education and engagement), the Women's Institute, the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship, and the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics. *See* Code § 905.03.D.1(c).

12. The proposed IMP protects sensitive portions of the natural and man-made environment, which are potentially affected by institutional development, in the following ways:

- *Steep Slopes.* The campus is organized as a series of building plateaus defined by topography that includes areas with slopes greater than 25 percent. Developments in the

IMP adjacent to these areas may be subject to the Environmental Performance Standards of Chapter 915, specifically, the Grading, Slope Revegetation, and Tree Protection and Replacement Standards. The Code lists the environmental overlay districts. Further evaluation on the applicability of these standards will occur during the development process based on topographical surveys of potential project sites. The goal of this plan is to limit development on steep slopes while providing increased accessible connections.

- *Trees.* The bucolic Shadyside Campus is a registered arboretum and a member of the American Public Garden Association with Tree Campus USA recognition for sustainable campus forestry. The *Chatham University Campus and Arboretum Tree Care Plan* was created to align with Tree Campus requirements and provides guidelines for new development activities. In collaboration with the Pittsburgh Shade Tree Commission and Tree Pittsburgh, 415 trees have been planted on campus since 2013. The University supports the City’s goal of planting 100,000 trees over 12 years and actively manages the arboretum to combat on-campus canopy loss due to storm damage and disease. In the next 10 years, Chatham will continue to maintain and grow tree canopy coverage—not only in the quantity of coverage, but also the quality of the canopy. Tree canopy impact for projects developed within the Ten-Year Development Envelope will be considered and are subject to evaluation by the Tree Advisory Committee.
- *Open space and stormwater.* The campus includes significant areas of open space and vistas, which will be maintained both as formal collegiate quads and rolling pastoral areas (*see IMP Section 7.5 Open Spaces*). These areas will not be developed, but they do provide opportunity for the University to continue to enhance their commitment to maintaining and improving stormwater management on campus. A terraced bioretention wetland is planned for the Chapel Hill open space, and the “New Quad” is to be redeveloped by removing the hidden impermeable paving and incorporating green infrastructure.

See Code § 905.03.D.1(d).