

# Hearing & Action Report

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## Duquesne University Institutional Master Plan DCP-MPZC-2019-00470

**PROPERTY:** Site bounded by Shingsiss Street, Boulevard of the Allies, Magee Street, and Watson Street. See attached map.  
**PROPERTY OWNER:** Duquesne University  
**NEIGHBORHOOD:** Uptown  
**Zoning District:** EMI and UPR-A  
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Public Hearing and Recommendation to City Council  
**COUNCIL DISTRICTS:** 6; Councilperson R. Daniel Lavelle  
**DATE:** June 1, 2021  
**SUBMITTED TO:** The Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh

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### FINDINGS OF FACT

1. An application for a new Institutional Master Plan and Zone Change was submitted by Duquesne University.
2. A zone change of Parcel 2-L-42 from UPR-A to EMI is included with the IMP application. The site is included in the University's 10-Year Development Envelope.
3. Notice of this Planning Commission hearing was 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 University had a Development Activities Meeting Uptown's two Registered Community Organizations, the Hill CDC and Uptown Partners, on August 24, 2020. Under the Pennsylvania Act 15 of 2020, related to the COVID-19 emergency, time limits may be waived, so the City has agreed to extend the one-year maximum from the Development Activities Meeting to the public hearing.
5. Duquesne University was the first academic institution to voluntarily participate in the Department of City Planning's Performance Targets Program (although the University of Pittsburgh was reviewed by Planning Commission first). For this program, City Planning coordinates a series of meetings where the project team collaborates with staff from the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure, Pittsburgh Sewer and Water Authority, Green Building Alliance, Port Authority, and multiple divisions at the Department of City Planning. The goal is to collectively identify opportunities to achieve excellence in energy and water use, open space and tree canopy provision, stormwater management, public art, and other public amenities. Duquesne University was an active participant in this process and their proposed IMP shows many benefits from their work with us including charting a realistic path to meeting 2030 District goals, commitment to expanding tree canopy and reducing impervious areas, creation of new open space as part of new building on Forbes Avenue and the new Forbes Gateway Park, commitment to establishing a transportation demand management program and no new (net) parking, and investment in the Duquesne University BRT station area. This process was designed to go hand-in-hand with the IMP Best Practices Guide adopted by the Planning Commission in 2018.

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

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**JUNE 1, 2021**

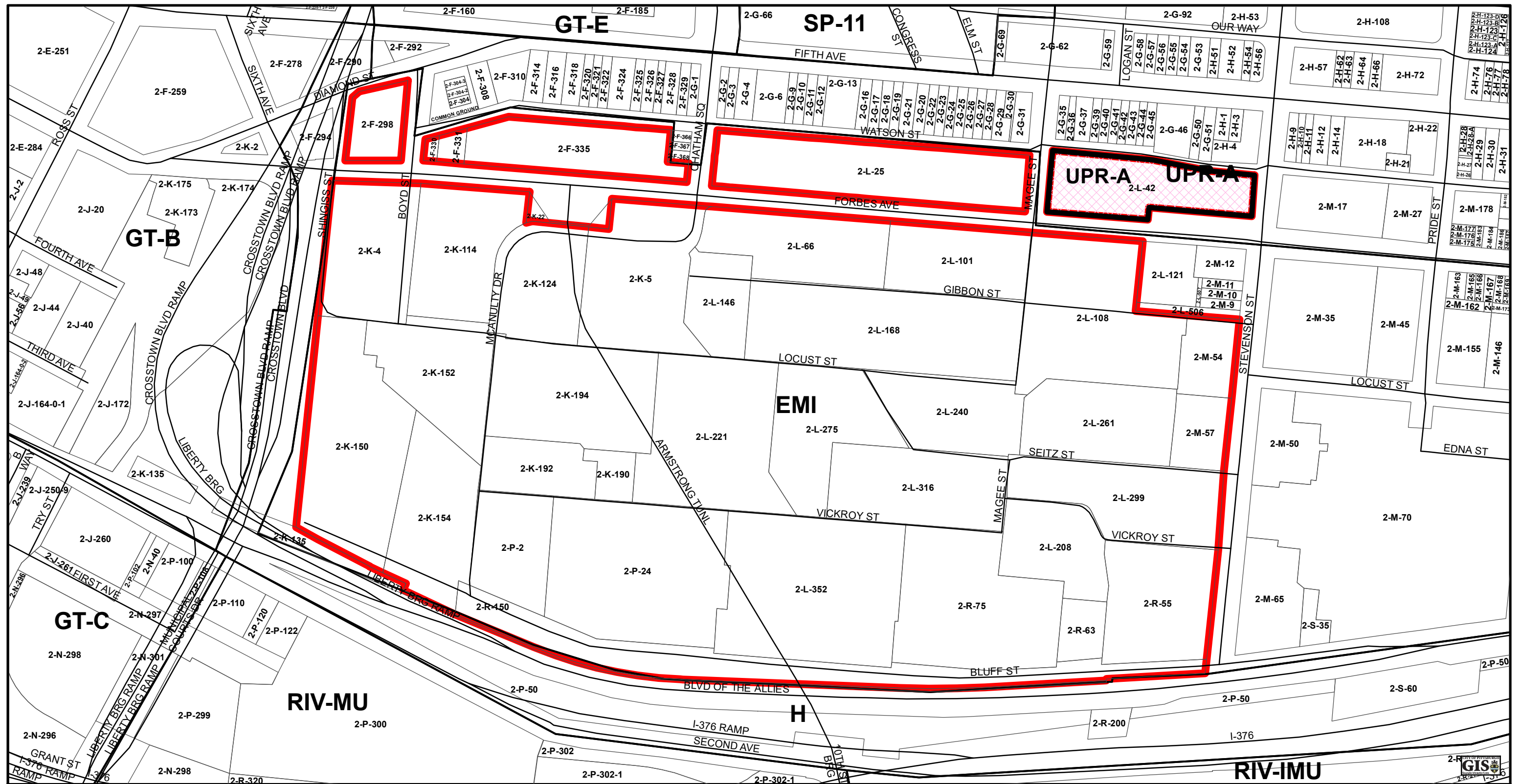
6. This Institutional Master Plan includes eleven new developments in the 10-Year Development Envelope. Project 1, UPMC Copper Fieldhouse, has already been constructed. The project was approved without an amendment to the previous IMP under ZBA 301 of 2018, which approved the project with a condition that the project be included in 2021-2031 IMP 10-Year Development Envelope.
7. The Transportation Impact Study (TIS) was reviewed and approved by the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI).
8. 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.
9. 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
  - (i) The recommendations of staff

**FINAL MOTION:**





That the Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh Recommends Approval to City Council of Zone Change Petition DCP-MPZC-2019-00470 to rezone one parcel associated with the Duquesne University Campus from Uptown Public Realm, Subdistrict A (UPR-A) to Educational Medical Institution (EMI) and Recommends Approval to City Council the Institutional Master Plan for Duquesne University dated April 2021.

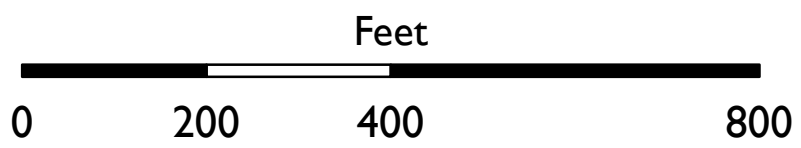
**SUBMITTED BY:**

William Gregory, Senior Planner (Development Review)



**DCP-MPZC-2019-004700 Duquesne University Institutional Master Plan and Zone Change from UPR-A (Uptown Public Realm Sub-district A) to EMI (Educational Medical Institution)**

-  Streets
-  Zone Change
-  Parcels
-  IMP Area
-  Zoning



WILLIAM PEDUTO  
MAYOR



ANDREW DASH, AICP  
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH  
**DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING**  
JOHN P. ROBIN CIVIC BUILDING

## Memorandum

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**TO:** Andrew Dash, AICP, Director of City Planning; Corey Layman, AICP, Zoning Administrator  
**FROM:** Derek Dauphin, Neighborhood Planner, Department of City Planning  
**DATE:** May 25, 2021  
**RE:** **Neighborhood Plan Conformance for Duquesne University Institutional Master Plan**

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The Duquesne University Institutional Master Plan (IMP) is within the area of the Uptown / West Oakland Ecolnnovation District Plan (the plan) adopted by Planning Commission on September 12, 2017. In this memo, Department of City Planning (DCP) staff have reviewed the proposed IMP to determine whether its proposals conform to the adopted plan.

This memo consists of two elements:

1. **Summary:** Includes staff's determination that the proposal is or is not in conformance with the neighborhood plan, the elements of the proposal that led to this determination, and recommendations to improve compatibility with the neighborhood plan;
2. **Progress on Plan Metrics:** Tracking table showing targets from the neighborhood plan and how approved projects and the current proposal meet or exceed these. Note: this table has not been updated to reflect proposals in the IMP. This will occur as projects in the IMP are brought forward for approval at a later date.

### 1. Summary

On the whole, staff determines that the proposed Duquesne University Institutional Master Plan (IMP) is in conformance with the adopted neighborhood plan. The adoption of an IMP within an area with its own adopted neighborhood is a unique condition. In making the determination that the IMP is in conformance with the adopted neighborhood plan, staff primarily reviewed the projects in the 10-Year Development Envelope. Each of these is briefly addressed below and elements that are consistent with the neighborhood plan are noted for the Planning Commission.

- UPMC Cooper Fieldhouse: this project was previously approved and under construction and was therefore not considered as part of this memo.
- College of Osteopathic Medicine: this project is consistent with EID Plan goals and policies related to growing an inclusion innovation economy and establishing workforce opportunities. Recent presentations of this project show that it will also be highly energy efficient, treat

stormwater with green infrastructure, provide new high quality publicly accessible open space on Forbes Avenue, and also allow for the creation of dedicated bicycle lanes as part of the Bus Rapid Transit proposals.

- **Mixed-Use Academic Building:** the EID Plan calls for re-establishing active ground floor uses and high quality public realm design on the Fifth and Forbes Avenue corridor which is consistent with the concept proposed for this building. The energy and water efficient features of this building, including the intent to connect the building to Uptown's growing district energy system, are also consistent with the Plan. Finally, this building will provide a new public plaza, which is consistent with multiple elements of the plan that seek to create more open spaces and manage stormwater issues. The IMP voluntarily commits DU to meeting the Uptown Public Realm District development standards in the Zoning Code designed to implement these elements of the EID Plan.
- **Arthur J. Rooney Field Projects, New Athletics Offices, and Alumni House:** These minor projects were not reviewed.
- **BRT Station:** the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposal was a key element of the EID Plan which called for transit-oriented plazas and public realm improvements that would improve comfort and safety on the corridor and support transit-oriented development. The proposal in the plan for a large station area at the intersection of Forbes Ave and McNulty Drive is consistent with EID Plan proposals because it is co-located with an existing public plaza with plants, seating, bike storage, and that serves as a connection to upper campus areas via elevators and stairways. Across Forbes Ave is another public plaza with retail space and a bookshop, further contributing to a node of transit-oriented activities.
- **Mixed-Use Residence Life Building:** in addition to the elements of this building that are similar to the Mixed-Use Academic Building above, this building will create new student housing, the desire for which is explicitly identified in EID Plan goal and policy language.
- **Forbes Avenue Gateway Park:** this project would add publicly accessible, privately provided park space in Uptown within easy walk of businesses and residential buildings on the Fifth and Forbes Avenue corridor. The EID Plan calls for the creation of a series of parks and open spaces including a Watson Blue/Green Alley that terminates in this location and provides. To start the implementation of this proposal from the plan, DCP undertook a community process to develop a concept plan that resulted in Duquesne University committing to enlarging a park space that was originally identified as taking place solely in the right-of-way on Boyd Street which was due to be closed between Watson Street and Forbes Avenue as part of BRT. The proposal for more open space in this location is highly consistent with EID Plan proposals to increase access to park like amenities, particularly where they can also manage stormwater.

Additionally, there are a number of other elements in the IMP that are highly relevant to the neighborhood plan and warrant comment.

- **District energy:** DU's partnership with Clearway to connect the neighborhood's two district steam and chilled water systems is consistent with EID Plan goals and policies related to establishing a neighborhood scale energy facilities that serve as many neighborhood buildings as possible. DU's commitment to connecting future building projects, including the College of Osteopathic Medicine, helps to further build out this system.
- **Parking and transportation demand management:** DU has committed to multiple new development projects, many of which remove existing surface parking along Forbes Avenue, without increasing the number of parking spaces. Instead, DU's strategies focus on getting people to and from campus using other modes. This is highly consistent with the EID Plan's goals on this topic as well as the forthcoming BRT project. The EID Plan explicitly calls for better use and sharing of existing parking resources and conversion of surface parking to other land uses that contribute to neighborhood goals.
- **Fifth Avenue commercial corridor strategy:** DU's commitment to working with property owners along Fifth Avenue between Boyd and Stevenson Streets implements a strategy within the EID

Plan that calls for reviving commercial corridors such Fifth Avenue through efforts such as corridor management, retaining existing businesses, improving curb appeal, and attracting new retail and commercial tenants.

- Sustainable landscape and stormwater management: the IMP directs DU transform its landscaping practices. Proposals throughout the IMP reflect this effort including green stormwater infrastructure strategies, targeting the use of standards such as Sustainable SITES, and setting a target to increase tree canopy from existing conditions. These elements of the proposal are consistent with many goals and policies within the EID Plan that focus on using landscaping to enhance local quality of life and overcome environmental hazards.
- Role in the community: the IMP continues DU's commitment to participating in community efforts in Uptown (e.g., Uptown Task Force), the Greater Hill District, and Mon Valley. This is consistent with elements of the EID Plan that specifically call for expanding institutional partnerships with community organizations and residents, and establishing district governance and resources to implement the EID Plan.

## 2. Progress on Plan Metrics

The adopted Uptown / West Oakland EcoInnovation District (EID) Plan identified a number of specific metrics, their status when plan was adopted in 2017, and targets for the 10-year life of the plan (through roughly 2030). This section will be updated to represent projects from the proposed IMP as they are brought forward following adoption of the IMP.

## Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 12/20/2019)

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

Logistics	Stakeholders
<b>Project Name/Address:</b> Duquesne University IMP and Zone Change	<b>Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):</b> RCOs, community non-profits, elected officials/staff, applicant staff and consultants, residents.
<b>Parcel Number(s):</b> Multiple	
<b>ZDR Application Number:</b> DCP-ZDR-2020-05391?	
<b>Meeting Location:</b> Virtual (Zoom)	
<b>Date:</b> 8/24/2020	
<b>Meeting Start Time:</b> 6:00 p.m.	
<b>Applicant:</b> Duquesne University	<b>Approx. Number of Attendees:</b> 20
<b>Boards and/or Commissions Request(s):</b> Planning Commission for IMP and Zone Change	

### 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.*

Identified the two projects (IMP and Zone Change), multiple meetings with Uptown Partners, held meetings with the Hill CDC, chose to participate in the Performance Targets Program, conducted other more targeted engagements, etc. Discussed the benefits of the College of Osteopathic Medicine, purchase of Life's Work of Western PA building which helped that organization to have some sustainability, sale of St Martin's Hall which returns property to taxable status. Described use of IMP Best Practices Guide and selection of consultant team. Described rounds of comments from City Planning staff and impact of COVID-19 on how cautious they need to be about what they can commit to doing. Noted changes that they made to their proposals during the planning process including the elimination of a proposal on Brottier Commons in response to faculty comments. Noted that a current project, Cooper Fieldhouse, is also included in the IMP because they got a variance to do that ahead of the IMP update. Noted the need for a zone change from Uptown Public Realm to EMI for the former Life's Work of Western PA site to create the College of Osteopathic Medicine. Noted 12 projects in the 10-year envelope and that many of them would be donor funded. Noted that a mixed-use project on Forbes Ave was taken out and put back in based on request of Uptown Partners. Also the creation of open space along Forbes Ave at Boyd Street in collaboration with the BRT project. Showed renderings of a number of the projects. Walked through current design thinking for the College of Osteopathic Medicine and desire to have it connected to district energy. Noted that they are making some final changes by the end of this month and have another meeting with the Hill CDC planned.

### Input and Responses



Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
When are you hoping to have your letters of support for the IMP and zoning change?	We will share the changes to the IMP with Uptown Partners so you can see them and we can have a meeting with you. We have met with a lot of different groups but so many groups are going through a hard time that they feel uncomfortable asking questions. Would like to meet with the new Executive Director at Uptown Partners.

**Other Notes**

None

**Planner completing report:** Derek Dauphin and Stephanie Joy Everett