

To: Ismail Smith Wade-El, Lancaster City Council President
City Council Community Planning Committee

CC: Douglas Smith, Chief Planner
Chris Delfs, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development

From: Eve Bratman, Chair, Lancaster City Planning Commission

Subject: 250 College Ave – UPMC Zoning Amendment Recommendation

January 30, 2020

Dear Members of City Council,

The Lancaster City Planning Commission voted unanimously at its January 15, 2020 meeting to recommend that the site of 250 College Ave. be rezoned to Mixed Use. The motion further suggested that the parcel “be used in a transformational way, with an orientation for low-income housing, homelessness, and services for children as a priority for the site.” The Mixed Use (MU) zoning gives considerable flexibility to any future use of the property, which presents both challenges and opportunities for the site. 250 College Ave. is a very large parcel in a location that is critical to various dimensions of the city’s future. As such, it contains abundant potential for bringing much-needed affordable housing and jobs for our citizens, and promises important tax revenue to the city as a whole.

Considering the fact that the mixed-use zone is the most flexible of zoning options and the history of the hospital site as a public-serving institution providing a social benefit, the Planning Commission recommended that the site’s future development should emphasize provision of similarly-oriented public benefit, as much as any future developer of the site and the city may be able to orient such uses. Further, the attached letters from myself and Ms. Ritchey specify recommendations for the site’s development that we believe should be considered by the City Council and prospective developers. These pertain primarily to the process through which the site is developed, and several additional points that were not extensively aired during our previous Commission meeting’s discussion due to time constraints, but that are nonetheless important recommendations.

In recognition of the importance of this parcel to the city as a whole, and the public contention over the site’s development, the case of 250 College Ave. makes clear that it is imperative that future decisions about rezoning and land use be guided by a new comprehensive plan. Hence, the Commission unanimously passed a motion to move forward with the comprehensive planning process. In so doing, we emphasize that all rezoning and planning efforts in the city should be oriented by a more current vision that incorporates thoughtful citizen input and guides Lancaster’s future growth while considering its needs for affordable housing and good jobs, sustainability commitments, and relationship to the rest of the county.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any further questions. I can be reached at 202-423-1198 or at ebratman@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Eve Bratman
Chair, Planning Commission, City of Lancaster

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Eve Bratman
Chair, Planning Commission, City of Lancaster

To: Lancaster City Planning Commission
Ismail Smith Wade-El, Lancaster City Council President
Douglas Smith, Chief Planner
Chris Delfs, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development

From: Eve Bratman, Chair, Lancaster City Planning Commission

Subject: 250 College Ave – UPMC Zoning Amendment Recommendation

Date: January 16, 2020

I am writing to supplement the recent motion by the Planning Commission to recommend re-zoning of 250 College Ave. from Hospital Complex (HC) to Mixed Use (MU), with additional comments. My recommendations for this large parcel are summarized below:

1. Affordable Housing: The city's priority for this site should be that any future development prioritize residential uses, specifically targeting affordability for low-income city residents. Council should gain assurances as much as possible through due diligence regarding affordable housing components on the site prior to making a decision about the Mixed Use re-zoning.
 - a. Considering that the 213 College Ave. parcel has been verbally committed to the city by UPMC, land designations for affordable housing units should remain the top priority for the 250 College Ave. parcel itself. Affordability goals should be targeted at those in the lowest 50% of the county AMI, moreover; by necessity, achieving this goal may require further City involvement, at least through leveraging Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) benefits.
 - i. It is worth noting that in terms of land area commitments, 213 College Ave. remains a tiny fraction of the total land at stake. The future land uses at 250 College Ave. remain an unknown, but the significantly smaller parcel at 213 Ave. that is (hopefully) going to be used as affordable housing in the future – though exact rates of affordability remain unknown – is only approximately 5.74% of land area of the two parcels combined.¹
 - b. UPMC and the city should work together prior to re-zoning approvals to ensure more land becomes designated for this purpose, and that existing verbal commitments are adhered. The city should obtain formal written agreements along such lines so as to maximize confidence that the land use will follow this use.
2. Public engagement and transparency: The new owner and prospective developer of the parcel at 250 College Ave. should host at least two public meetings about the site regarding the master plan for development of larger parcels, so that city residents and the City may actively be involved in understanding and giving input into the redevelopment process, in addition to the Historical Commission's review and existing opportunities for public engagement at official Council and Planning Commission meetings.

¹ Parking for the 213 College Ave. site remains relatively unknown, so the 5.74% calculation above is likely even less, when the associated need for parking is taken into consideration.

3. The 250 College Ave site should be redeveloped with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle-friendly access and connectivity within the site and be porous with other parts of the neighborhood, in keeping with the principles of *places2040* .
4. High-density dwelling units, in addition to the creation of additional green space and tree canopy, should be prioritized for the site. I recommend that future development yield an increase the green area on the site, and that zoning for higher density be required by-right. Further, reducing the existing impervious surface area overall while offering a mix of uses compatible with the neighborhood's needs and smart growth principles should be central priorities.
5. Adaptive reuse of the existing structures on the site should be prioritized whenever possible, in balance with rehabilitating historic structures, and emphasizing green/ sustainable and low-carbon emissions construction and design features, in keeping with the city's commitment to climate action.
6. Parking should be concentrated in the interior, below, or above the structures, rather than on any of the street-facing sides of the parcel.
7. Further exploration and conversations with site developers should consider the balance between job opportunities and commercial opportunities in the city, along with the need expressed by many city residents for public services including but not limited to: health care, homeless shelters / transitional housing, youth development and support. The site's non-residential features will ideally strike some balance between these needs, and Council should reassure itself of these designations as components of the Mixed Use of the site as best it can.

This parcel is a significant for the future of the City of Lancaster, and is an especially exciting and appropriate opportunity to achieve a mix of uses given the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Ultimately, re-zoning will allow for the highest and best use for redevelopment for the City and its residents. At the same time, prior to formalizing the re-zoning, it is important to gain more clarity about the future developer's intentions for the site and to engage the public actively in finding solutions for the site's development that respond to the City's needs as a whole. I urge Council to conduct further diligence regarding the site and to engage in creative solutions regarding its uses. Obtaining a publicly-responsible and beneficial development on the site will be to all of our long-term benefit, even if it is a necessarily slow process to duly guarantee such aims are achieved.

Sincerely,

Eve Bratman

To: Lancaster City Planning Commission
Ismail Smith Wade-El, Lancaster City Council President
Douglas Smith, Chief Planner
Chris Delfs, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development

From: Jocelynn Ritchey, Planning Commission At-Large Member
Subject: 250 College Ave – UPMC Zoning Amendment Recommendation
Date: January 16, 2020 (Revised February 3, 2020)

This memo is in response to the January 15th, 2020 motion by the Planning Commission to recommend the re-zoning of the parcel located at 250 College Ave. from Hospital Complex to Mixed Use, as well as provide additional comments. I have included my recommendations below:

1. Parcel Use:
 - a. Further discussions between the city, and the future developer to ensure a use which is beneficial to the city and its residents. Further discussion of the current verbal agreements which should then be formalized as written agreements.
 - i. Written agreement between UPMC and the City of Lancaster regarding the donation of the land and building at 213 College Ave. and shared parking agreement with developer of 250 College Ave. parcel.
 - b. A focus on a housing component, with a portion/percentage of the units participating in the Section 8 (Housing Choice Voucher) or Section 42 (LIHTC) program
 - c. Residents have expressed that the UPMC urgent care facility across the street from the former hospital is inadequate in providing care, discussion with UPMC about expanding existing facility to a Primary Care office, or new developer including medical use office space in land use plan.
2. Public Participation and Transparency
 - a. Public participation in which the new owner/prospective developer agrees to host a series of public meetings with city residents which are to be facilitated by City of Lancaster Staff or appointed representative.
 - b. A submission of the proposed land use plan to the city once a sales agreement between UPMC and the buyer has been executed, as well as a publicly available timeline for the rehabilitation.

I recognize the importance of modifying the zoning of the parcel from Hospital Complex to Mixed Use, due to the many important benefits the redevelopment of this parcel will provide to the city. This includes the elimination of a vacant and under-utilized building and parcel, and a return of a parcel with a high assessment value to the city tax rolls. Re-zoning will allow for the highest and best use for redevelopment for the city and its residents. I also acknowledge that there is a need for sensitivity in this matter due to community's connection to the parcel, as well as the fact that this is one of the largest, if not the largest, parcel in the city that will have the opportunity for redevelopment in our lifetimes.