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Homes, businesses could be in future for former St. Joseph's Hospital site



HEATHER STAUFFER | Staff Writer

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UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster, known to many Lancaster County residents as the former St. Joseph Hospital, closed its doors on Thursday, February 28, 2019.

Suzette Wenger

The owner of a former hospital in Lancaster city wants the property rezoned for mixed-use, which would allow for commercial and residential redevelopment of the 6.4-acre site.

In its Dec. 11 rezoning petition, UPMC Pinnacle says it doesn't anticipate another hospital on the property, which occupies the entire block bounded by West Walnut Street and College, Marietta and West End avenues.

UPMC has not submitted a development plan, according to city officials, but its petition says it does not intend to recommence hospital or related uses on the site.



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TIM STUHLREHER | Staff Writer

The likelihood of another hospital being constructed on the site is "minimal," it says, and the current zoning as hospital complex severely limits "the ability to redevelop the property."

UPMC said in the petition that the system and any future owners "intend to develop the property for residential, commercial and related uses, similar to what is on the surrounding grounds," and that "Plans for such development will require further approvals from the city and will go through an extensive review and approval process."

The petition comes exactly a year after [UPMC's 2018 announcement](#) that it was shutting down the facility best known by its original name of St. Joseph Hospital, but more recently called Lancaster Regional Medical Center and then UPMC Pinnacle Lancaster. It closed in February.

The petition does not provide any further details on prospective uses of the site, but says rezoning to mixed use will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and will "provide for future growth, development and expansion of the property that might otherwise sit idle and deteriorate."

Asked about its plans for the property, UPMC did not provide further details beyond this statement: "The hospital property is still for sale, and UPMC Pinnacle continues to work with potential buyers."



The system has not disclosed how much it's asking for the property or who has expressed interest in it.

Mixed-use zoning allows a variety of residential, commercial, cultural, light industrial and other miscellaneous uses, but city code notes that it "is considered primarily as a high-density residential district" and that any manufacturing use "must meet certain conditions and receive special exception approval."

Mixed-use zoning would allow a "special hospital" only with a special exception, according to city code.

The petition is scheduled to be considered at the city planning commission meeting Wednesday, Dec. 18, at 6 p.m.

Lancaster's director of community planning and economic development, Chris Delfs, said in an email Thursday that the city "is open to the general idea of redeveloping this property as mixed use," but will have to conduct further evaluation of the application and will be prepared for further comment at the Dec. 18 meeting.





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