



**Agenda Item #:** 9

**Project Title:** 750 University Row - Amendment to an Approved Planned Development (PD) for Expansion of UW Health Located in UDD 6. 19th Ald. Dist.

**Legistar File ID #:** 76633

**Members Present:** Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Christian Harper, Shane Bernau, Amanda Arnold, Russell Knudson, and Rafeeq Asad

**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Summary

At its meeting of March 15, 2023, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for expansion of UW Health located at 750 University Row in UDD 6. Registered and speaking in support were Jenni Eschner, Jen Voigt, and Michael McKay. Registered in support and available to answer questions were Dietmar Bassuner and Paul Lenhart.

The existing PD did envision expansion of the health clinic to increase density and activation, which will occur over the existing surface parking lot. The existing primary entry is facing the surface parking area with a canopy drop-off area. This entry area is an active space with transfer vehicles and pick-ups/drop-offs for patients. The proposed new site plan pushes the height and density towards University Row as opposed to the “street” side, with the new entry proposed as north as possible within the scope of the new project. They are extending the bike path to the southern extent of the property line, and proposing patient drop-off at the front of the building. They are putting as much parking as possible underground and all parking will be within the structure, which will be fifty percent green roof and fifty percent solar panels to meet their project sustainability goals. The project is scaled lower on the west where it abuts single family residential and will screen as much as possible with landscaping. They are introducing a bit of vertical to this façade into the stone to balance the overall street experience, using horizontal roof in strategic locations with overhang elsewhere for interest and hierarchy in the façade. Patients circulate and wait along the glass at every level for transparency. Cladding for the parking picks up on the brick color of the building. Bioretention areas and storm sewer rerouting are included in this project, and the new TOD zoning layer bisects the site, requiring thirty percent of the building façade to be within 20-feet of the street. Similarly, the drop-off is not allowed in its proposed location, but is a unique need for their patients and critical to their programming. While there is a potential option to rotate the building about 4 degrees, it would be difficult given the geometries involved; they are continuing to work through this with City staff.

The Commission discussed the following:

- We don't control the TOD boundary or control any conformance or any relief on the setback for this project, right?
- (Secretary) The TOD overlay would require an amendment to the zoning ordinance as a separate process, UDC is not a reviewing agency on those requests. This is a PD, any modification or exceptions to the TOD overlay would be a similar request as a setback modification to a standard zoning district. Think about the PD review and approval standards in thinking about those exceptions.
- The PD cannot be exempt from the TOD overlay district?
- (Secretary) It can, the PD can be written to allow the exceptions.

- It's not in our control but the information is still useful to understand how the design is where it is. The staff report asked us to look at the overall building design and materials, how it works with the existing building, the entrance orientation and the pedestrian environment at University Row.
- Overall I like it, I'm familiar with the area and it fits well into the context. You've had conversations with the neighbors to the west who want the lower building height. I do have concerns about them potentially looking back at the wall of the parking garage. I am wondering if there is flexibility in the location of the green roof, if you could flip the green roof with the solar panels, those panels would be viewed more from University Avenue and the residents would have a view of the green roof instead. What influenced where the panels go versus the green roof?
  - The houses are lower, I don't imagine they will look upon the roof. From a site planning perspective, the green roof is more north/northwest facing, the investment in solar wouldn't pay back there because they would be shaded the majority of the day.
- It looks like a really nice melding of the new building and the existing building. Sometimes these kinds of projects look like two separate parts awkwardly put together. These come together in a way that looks like it was designed as one, which is a big plus.
- How exciting it is to see this much green roof and solar on one project. Nice to see a really expansive green roof and swath of solar panels. From an operational/functional standpoint of a green roof over an unheated parking garage as opposed to an occupied heated building, are there technical issues that would be challenging with that?
  - UW Health has recently pursued this method, they are doing that on the Eastpark project, and we'll continue to work through that aspect with our designers and landscape architects.
- Good luck on the various exceptions for the drop-off area. I've recently had to take my mom to UW facilities, I can attest to how important a covered drop-off area is. At the same time you do have a challenging issue with what is probably going to be busier and busier sidewalk and bike traffic out front that you have to meld with that. Look forward to seeing how this project progresses.
- I think it looks really nice, you did a good job of giving it its own identity and yet looking cohesive with the existing building. I like the parking structure, the panels are nice and warm, the texture, and I liked the tone. My only comment is on rendering A12 where at the end of the parking structure, the building above the parking structure shows a blank wall at the end of the building, is anything planned for that? You can see that it's going to be pretty visible. Is it a backdrop to something?
  - Functionally what is happening there is we were trying to avoid having, a lot of times in healthcare you have these air handlers that are popping all over your low roofs. So we are bringing a significant volume of air from the parking structure in the first floor up into the enclosed rooftop penthouse through a direct route at the end of the building. There's opportunity to break up that massing, and use other materials even if it can't be transparent there. There's other things we can study.
- I'm trying really hard to critique and coming up short, I really like this project. Has future expansion of the parking garage or the building coming out over the garage is been considered?
  - We are pretty much maximizing this site with this project and parking. We don't have major plans for vertical expansion or horizontal expansion over a vertical area.
- Kudos to the team, it's a huge benefit that this ramp was submerged and not creating a bigger mass. It's a wonderful design.
- Looks like a nice project, very excited to see that large green roof. There is green roof on the existing building, I would strongly advocate that this green roof be at least a semi-intensive profile for more stormwater retention, lower maintenance, and plugging it with native pollinators. I look forward to seeing that in future presentations and hope that is something that can be accommodated.
- The address 750 is probably not part of this approval, but the numbers are gigantic. We'll expect to see much smaller address numbers.
- The wall containing the relief from the garage, you might look into the inflation reduction act incentives or building integrated solar on that wall, might be advantageous.

- I would hope that the building design and siting isn't dictated on a minor discrepancy in the percentage of façade within a boundary. I'm seeing how the pedestrian would have to move around the drop-off and back to the sidewalk, I much prefer the "original" site plan where the sidewalk goes straight across and the drop-off really is for vehicles. This isn't a department or grocery store, people with healthcare don't really choose their provider based on who is closest to their neighborhood, we have to accept the fact that there will be cars driving in and out of there, but if we can minimize confusion with pedestrians who want to just walk past the building it would be a better scenario. If the PD can dictate that in its zoning designation, hopefully that's the way the developer can go.

## Action

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.