

April 19, 2021

Christine Mondor, Chair, City of Pittsburgh Planning Commission
Department of City Planning
Via electronic mail

RE: DCP-MPZC-2019-00675 University of Pittsburgh Institutional Master Plan (IMP)

Dear Chairwoman Mondor and Members of the Planning Commission:

I submit testimony on behalf of Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC), a community-based organization whose mission is to build a better Oakland and help neighbors thrive. Fundamental to our work is communicating to the public about development proposals and hosting public meetings to discuss plans and proposals. We are also the Registered Community Organization for the four Oakland neighborhoods.

The University of Pittsburgh engaged the Oakland community in a robust public process during the development of the IMP. This process took place during much of 2019. OPDC actively participated in the variety of opportunities and promoted the meetings to the community. OPDC offered extensive feedback during that time, a good deal of which has been incorporated into the document before you. OPDC supports the IMP and encourages your approval.

OPDC hosted a development activities meeting regarding the IMP on October 29, 2019. We hosted the university at a community meeting September 29, 2020 where they provided an update to the IMP – notably the removal of one proposed development site adjacent to the neighborhood. That site will require more public process, and will be revisited in future.

Department of City Planning guidance regarding IMPs has made a positive impact on the quality of plans from our institution partners. Most notably, the quality of the Neighborhood Enhancement Section of the IMP. While in the past this section would be an afterthought with vague statements of avoidance of harm, the strategy in this IMP contains actual enhancement items to lift up neighborhood strategies and support goals of neighborhood residents. As a specific example, the Neighborhood Enhancement Strategy includes promotion of homeownership in Oakland and investment in the Oakland Community Land Trust. This and many of the other recommendations in that section of the IMP will actually support and enhance the Oakland community. We appreciate the commission's thorough review and thoughtful comments related to the IMP and the impact on the Oakland community and encourage approval.

Sincerely,



Wanda E. Wilson
Executive Director

We build a better Oakland and help neighbors thrive.

235 Atwood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 tel: 412.621.7863 fax: 412.621.5920 www.opdc.org