



## **Top of the Hill Project** **Community Engagement Process - Responses to Questions & Comments**

**Goals Established for the Project:** The Developer and the City seek to collaboratively create a signature mixed use destination district that serves as a gateway to the City and a link between the City and the adjacent University Circle area of Cleveland. The City's goal is that the development of the Project Site shall, at a minimum:

- a. Creates a dense, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly commercial district that dovetails with the architecture and aesthetics of the surrounding neighborhood;
- b. Provides a visual and symbolic entrance to the City;
- c. Complements existing neighborhood businesses and serves as a destination for the region;
- d. Catalyzes additional development;
- e. Creates positive economic and fiscal benefits for the neighborhood and the City;
- f. Improves existing parking and traffic conditions;
- g. Incorporates greenspace and uses sustainable best practices;
- h. Effectively incorporates community feedback into the design;
- i. Encourages the inclusion of minority-owned and female-owned business enterprises in the construction of the development.

**The following is a list of responses from Flaherty & Collins (F&C) and the City to various comments made throughout the Community Engagement Process:**

### **1. Is it possible to wrap retail uses around Edwards Road from Cedar Road – heading north on Edwards Road?**

The Design Team has implemented this on both corners of the lane that leads into the garage off Cedar. Based upon conversations with retailers and brokers, we are receiving a consistent message that any retail will need Cedar Road frontage to be viable.

### **2. Is it possible to provide only one curb cut off Cedar Road instead of two?**

The Design Team has implemented this change into the latest iteration of the plans; however, this will need to be further assessed as part of the traffic and parking study for the site to ensure that this does not have any negative impacts on the functionality of the garage.

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**3. Is it possible to align the driveway with Delaware Drive? Can a pedestrian crossing and signalization be provided at this location?**

It is believed that this could cause additional undesirable strain on the neighborhood areas to the south. Our team has studied aligning the driveway with Delaware Drive and believe that it will not work with the current design and program objectives in that it will have a negative impact on the desired density and traffic flow to the interior of the development.

**4. Can Edwards Road be aligned to intersect closer to 90 degrees with Euclid Heights Blvd.? What is the potential for this to lead to/encourage “cut through” traffic movements; this would also increase the distance from Edwards Road to the Buckingham’s entry;**

The Design Team has incorporated this change into the latest iteration of the plans. The Development Partner, City and traffic engineers continue to evaluate the effect of the alignment of Edwards Road on the development and surrounding neighborhoods. Consideration is being given to restricting access and the design of this road.

**5. Driveway next to Nighttown Outdoor Patio – may be an issue if not buffered; suggestion to eliminate driveway and create a park;**

After extensive study of this, the Design Team resolved to propose the elimination of this driveway to create a pocket park adjacent to Nighttown. The Design Team believes this will address this concern provided that there are no negative impacts based on the traffic analysis when completed.

**6. Early project plans appeared “monolithic” – not enough variety between designs of buildings;**

The current design employs a strategy that is sensitive to the scale of the neighborhood, has a variety in massing, height and façade treatments along Cedar Road, Euclid Heights Boulevard and the newly created Edwards Road. This strategy will be further enhanced as the design is refined and suggestions and changes incorporated.

**7. Can buildings be higher particularly at the “point”?**

The current program has been balanced with close attention to the desired density, parking needs and cost efficiencies. The proposed buildings could be taller but not without impacting the program, construction types and associated costs.

**8. The “point” still needs work – design needs to be more iconic?**

F&C is keenly aware that it is very important to achieve a design of the highest quality that meets a number of objectives specifically at the “point” and that is not limited to the architectural design of the building but also includes site design, design of the outdoor plaza and streetscape, landscape design, exterior lighting, etc. The Design Team will continue to refine the design to create a cohesive solution that will become a legacy for the City.

**9. Is the area at the intersection of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Cedar Road conducive to pedestrians / a unique place for people to gather, or is the traffic too heavy in this area – is it more vehicle oriented? Will outdoor seating in a plaza work here?**

It is F&C’s opinion that the “point” is not a location conducive to retail use, nor a good area for pedestrian activity based upon the adjacent traffic flows. With this, we have focused the design to provide visual activity through the strategic placement of interior amenities in this area and kept the outdoor amenities above the first floor.

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**10. Need for public art and/or more significant landscaping at the “point” – the Trellis on top floor needs more work because it will become a symbol of the city;**

F&C agrees there is a unique opportunity to create something special at the “point” as it will become the gateway marker into Cleveland Heights. The landscape design has yet to be developed. Our team will be continuing to refine the design for this element through subsequent development of the design.

**11. The Cedar streetscape needs a continuous canopy of shade trees because it is south facing and facing a residential neighborhood; more information is needed about the streetscape furnishings, sidewalk width, and landscaping;**

At this time a landscape architect has not been engaged into the design of the project; however, all of these items will be addressed in the subsequent development of the design.

**12. Metered parallel parking should be on both sides of Cedar Road; Can Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Blvd. be put on road diets?**

Flaherty and Collins is in favor of adding the parking as requested; however, these areas are outside of the parameters of the project and this would need to be undertaken by the City. The City will be reviewing street parking.

**13. RTA bus stop including the shelter should be visually appealing and compatible with this project— not a standard bus stop;**

Flaherty and Collins is in favor of creating the “bus shelter” as requested; however, these areas are outside of the parameters of the project and this would need to be undertaken by the City. The City will review this at the appropriate time.

**14. City should examine developer’s market assumptions about target apartment market unit sizes. Consider conversion to ownership and flexibility so units can be altered;**

Our unit mix and size will be both a consideration to what is occurring in the local market and upon our national experience. Units will be high quality and convertible to ownership should that market return.

**15. Address Nighttown’s loading and service needs;**

The current design employs the use of a service drive to the East of the proposed parking deck which will give Nighttown access to the North side of their existing building. As the design of the project advances it is our intent to work with Nighttown to ensure a functional solution relative to their service needs.

**16. How will this development become a destination for non-residents to visit; will more retail be added?**

F&C’s vision is to create a development which will give non-residents the opportunity to visit retail, green space and parking within the project. Our current design adds approximately 15,000 sf of retail space, which is a significant amount in today’s world. Based on our experience and conversations with local retail professionals, adding more retail would be difficult to fill with tenants and we believe that having “dark” retail isn’t in the best interest of the city nor us.

**17. Is it possible to separate the one apartment building into various buildings with gaps between the buildings so it looks like it was incrementally developed?**

The current design has been balanced with close attention to achieving the desired density, parking needs, and architectural variety within a cost-effective framework. Creating separate buildings would decrease efficiencies, increase costs and reduce density.

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**18. The tallest, westernmost section of the apartment building looks like it faces Euclid Heights Boulevard which may not be the right emphasis;**

The design intent is to create a building that expresses activity along Cedar Road with a vertical emphasis at the corner and still addresses Euclid Heights Boulevard and offers panoramic views. The design of the corner building will continue to be refined.

**19. Make the part of the Cedar Road building that is gray and a bridge more transparent; another comment was that it looked heavy and foreboding;**

Based upon input received, our design team has re-imagined the bridge design and created something that we believe will be more appealing, however, all of these items will be further addressed in the subsequent development of the design.

**20. Add wooden panels in recessed balconies for richness and a contemporary look; not a fan of the spandrels that are yellowish orange.**

The “yellowish orange spandrels” shown in the renderings are intended to be a wood composite panel to add warmth to the palette of materials and enhance the modern façade treatment.

**21. Edwards Road has tremendous potential for “placemaking”;**

We agree that there is potential for “placemaking” on the newly created Edwards Road. However, the design solution needs to have the proper balance between 1) form and function, 2) semi-public and semi-private and 3) vehicular and pedestrian orientation. Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard are the main public roads bordering the development. Edwards Road will function as a public drive and sidewalk system for patrons using the public parking deck, residents of the new development and surrounding residential buildings as well as service area for the proposed development and The Buckingham building. At the entry to Edwards Road from Cedar Road there will be opportunities for the development of outdoor space associated with the ground floor retail. The retail space and lobby leading to the common amenities wrap the North side of the ground floor of the building along Cedar Road while the residential units at the ground floor along the East side of Edwards Road will have direct entry units where feasible. The design of the streetscape in this zone will have a more intimate scale than the adjacent public streets.

**22. Parking must be convenient for success of retail;**

Flaherty & Collins Properties agrees wholeheartedly that parking is vital to the success of retail. With this in mind, the Design Team has developed the site to accommodate both surface parking and structured parking. As the design is developed further, we’ll be engaging consultants for both traffic flow and parking in order to ensure the success of the parking solutions.

**23. Has walkability and pedestrian needs been taken into consideration in this development?**

The proposed development will include a fully developed streetscape along Cedar Road, Euclid Heights Boulevard and the newly created Edwards Road. There will be retail with outdoor seating opportunities, an outdoor plaza, pocket parks, public art, walk-up units and public parking allowing access to the Cedar Fairmount District.

**24. Upon arrival to the site coming up Cedar Hill, the development should instill pride and happiness perhaps with public art;**

We completely agree as this is our objective too. We would like to incorporate public art at the pedestrian plaza at the corner intersection of Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard.

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**25. The proposed structures need to resemble, in material and scale, the existing structures in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. The development should exude a sense of permanence and stability to stand the test of time;**

The development is to be built of the highest quality materials possible, consistent with the architectural style and elements necessary to complement the surrounding district and neighborhood, in order to achieve a project that is both market-supported and consistent with the project budget.

**26. The developers mentioned the opportunity to “go green” on the project. Will rain gardens, minimize storm water run-off, etc. be part of the project;**

The project is to use sustainable best practices. The Developer shall design and construct the project in a manner to receive LEED Silver Certification from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). The Developer shall apply for and receive LEED Silver Certification for the project. Storm water management will be an important part of the design of this project.

**27. Please discuss the sewer system. We understand it is part of the project but the impact to the surrounding streets/homes is a concern;**

The City will review the impact on the utility system and surrounding neighborhoods as part of the overall review and approval process for the project.

**28. Support was voiced for the idea of incorporating “orthodoxy at the Starbucks end and moving towards and concluding with experimentally new/even radical architecture at the “point”;**

This suggestion of transitioning the architectural theme from the “traditional” to the more “modern” design along Cedar Road from Nighttown to the “point” has been incorporated into the current building renderings and has received very positive comments at past community and focus group meetings.

**29. I’d like the project to include a public space for performances, ceremonies, celebrations, small art fairs, etc. Please make some parking for handicapped accessibility. Please put as much greenspace for the public as possible because neighborhood people will want to walk w/little kids;**

A courtyard and “pocket park” have been added along Euclid Heights Boulevard, and a “pocket park” has been added near Nighttown. How these areas could or would be programmed, if at all, is to be determined.

**30. Please make the design compatible with the neighborhood – Tudor, Georgian, etc. There are 100 year old homes on S. Overlook;**

Please see answers to questions #25 & #28 above.

**31. The bulk of the buildings in this project face either south or west. These directions are difficult to control in terms of extreme heat gain during afternoon and evening sun. You need to put in thick insulation in outside walls. Consider 3-pane windows with argon gas, and I’d strongly recommend having automatic shades that open and close in different seasons at different times to keep the interior from overheating. These could be changed by individuals, i.e. flexibility by local residents;**

This concern has been noted and has been referred to the Design Team.

**32. Please no parking on S. Overlook. Even now some CWRU students park & walk to school. Noise can be an issue late on Friday and Saturday. Bars and restaurants can be a noise concern. Perhaps a permit system should be implemented on S. Overlook. South Overlook is a residential area. No commercial parking please.**

This concern has been noted by the City and will be discussed as part of the project review process.

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**33. Concerns raised from those that are permit holders in Lot 9: Once construction begins: Where will I park? Where will all the project construction workers park?**

The construction of the parking garage will be one of the first improvements constructed on the site. This is estimated to be a 9 to 12 month time period. Currently, Lot 9 has 225 spaces, with approximately 174 permit holders. As part of the overall temporary parking plan during construction, 50 spaces will be provided on-site for Nighttown, and an additional 40 spaces will be provided on-site for residents of the Buckingham. The City is currently working with property owners in the area and negotiating to replace the Lot 9 spaces during construction. The location of construction worker parking is to be determined.

**34. Concern for pedestrian crossing at TOH intersection? S. Overlook pedestrian crossing not safe because many cars on eastbound Cedar blow through the red signal (can't see it). 25 mph speed limit should extend to west of TOH intersection;**

All such concerns will be addressed during the traffic studies required for the project.

**35. Why so much parking? Walkable districts need to be inconvenient to private autos to be successful!**

Lot 9 provides 225 parking spaces to the Cedar Fairmount District. The City has committed to replacing these spaces in the new parking garage as part of this project. A parking study is being prepared for the development and the entire District. Using a factor of 1 space per unit is consistent with other similar mixed-use development. The goal is to “right size” the number of parking spaces provided as part of this development.

**36. Are bike lanes a pipe dream here? The new recreation paths flanking Cedar Hill are great.**

This comment is noted and will be evaluated as the project moves forward.

**37. Where in the new garage will Buckingham residents park? What will residents be charged for parking?**

The location of parking within the new garage has yet to be determined. Currently in Lot 9, parking permits are \$115 per quarter (and all City lots). Senior permits (over age 65) are \$34.50 per quarter (also applies to all City lots). Meters are \$.25 per 30 minutes with the first half hour free enforced 24 hours, with the first hour being \$.25, with subsequent hours being \$.50. While it is early in the process and premature to state an established parking rate for the garage, as part of the approved Development Agreement, the Developer shall establish commercially reasonable rates for the public parking spaces that are consistent/compatible with parking rates in the Cedar-Fairmount District, taking into account location, age, amenities, and other commercially reasonable factors.

**38. Has consideration been given to improved public transit amenities to help reduce traffic and parking needs? Pull-over bus stop lanes, “Disney”-style bus stations, covered bus lanes, etc.? What consideration is being given to changing the roadway to reduce vehicle speeds – on-street parking lanes, street trees, pedestrian islands, more curves in the street?**

This comment is noted and will be evaluated as the project moves forward.

**39. When ODOT changed Cedar Hill to its current configuration, rush hour went from non-existent to packed. What will the project do to Cedar Hill traffic?**

All such concerns will be addressed during the traffic studies required for the project.

**40. With retail suffering nationwide, please limit commercial space. Don't want to see empty storefronts at entrance to CH. We need a pharmacy;**

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See answer to #16 above. In addition, potential uses and tenants are being referred to Flaherty & Collins for evaluation. F&C is required to submit a merchandising plan to the City as part of the approved Development Agreement for this project.

**41. Are there any economic development incentives being used for this project?**

The City and the CHUH School District agreed in March of 2018 to approve the creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for this project. This was done to enable the financing of the project and to provide a mechanism for financial compensation to the school district. The TIF exempts 100% of the increase in the assessed value in the TIF area for a period of 30 years to provide for payment by the developer of the costs of the project improvements.

Presently, the school district receives a little over \$20,000 annually from property taxes assessed on the Top of the Hill site, which is currently used as a municipal surface parking lot. Once the project is constructed, the increased value of the new buildings and improvements to the site are projected to result in compensation to the school district of almost \$400,000 each year the TIF is in place. The TIF is necessary to finance the construction of the project improvements, and provides very strong and significant school compensation opportunities for the school district as compared with the revenue generated by continuing to use the project site as a municipal surface parking lot.

**42. Initially the project scope included a boutique or nationally branded hotel. Why is this no longer part of the project scope?**

The Developer conducted an extensive market analysis which indicated that there is no market support at this time. While hotels are difficult everywhere, some of the economic challenges with a hotel at the Top of the Hill are that the Cleveland market generally is at a high saturation point of occupancy levels and average daily rates are not high. A hotel at the Top of the Hill would always be susceptible to products coming online at the bottom of the hill. Potential competition from existing and potential future hotel uses located “down the hill” and difficulties in meeting sustainable occupancy rates are significant challenges in locating a hotel at this project site.

According to the market study, locating a hotel use at the project at this time would require significant resources from the City to subsidize the project. The subsidy needed to make the hotel financially viable and able to attract capital, was projected to be \$6-\$8 million. This is not an option that is supported by the budget for the project.

**43. How will the project impact infrastructure in the area, particularly storm water management?**

Per our conversation with consulting firm Wade Trim last year regarding initial plans, the developer will have to add some storm water measures, i.e., bio-retention, etc., to manage additional storm water onsite. Wade Trim, Inc. discussed this with project design engineer Landform last year. Otherwise, no concerns from Wade Trim based on this initial plan review.