

LOWER HILL REDEVELOPMENT – BLOCK G1
DRP SUBMISSION – COVER PAGES, PROJECT NARRATIVE AND EXHIBITS

December 30, 2019

Ms. Marimba Milliones
President and CEO
Hill Community Development Corporation
2015 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Ms. Felicity Williams
Programs and Policy Manager
Hill Community Development Corporation
2015 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**RE: Design Review Panel Submission
Lower Hill Redevelopment Plan
Block G1 Project Narrative**

Dear Ms. Milliones and Ms. Williams,

On behalf of our entire development team, Lower Hill Developer LLC – an affiliate of The Buccini/Pollin Group – respectfully submits this Design Review Panel (DRP) package for the proposed Block G1 project in the Lower Hill Redevelopment site. The materials are submitted for the review of the DRP at its earliest regular meeting.

We believe that no other project of this scale has been developed in the City with the scope of community partnership benefits that this development team is committed to delivering. The development team has presented this project to the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan Executive Management Committee (CCIP EMC) and to the general public at advertised open community meetings on May 15, 2019 and July 16, 2019. The development team has affirmed its commitment to meeting the recorded Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP) objectives in these meetings and by way of the initial Letter of Intent to the Sports and Exhibition Authority (SEA) and Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA).

The Block G1 project will be developed and constructed in partnership with the Greater Hill District community and will be consistent with the established goals for community participation and ownership identified in the CCIP. The CCIP framework was developed with extensive community input and participation, thereby establishing the framework for realizing the Lower Hill redevelopment project impact to the community and providing an outline for community engagement. A summary of the project specific M/WBE goals, local workforce goals, wealth building initiatives and Reinvestment Fund capital infusion can be found in the section below on *Community Partnership Benefits*.

The Block G1 tower project is a critical component for the Lower Hill Redevelopment and will be a signature project for the region. The development team has entered into a letter of intent with F.N.B. Corporation, a publicly-traded financial institution (“Anchor Commercial Tenant”) for 159,000 square feet of commercial space and prominent tower naming rights. The Anchor Commercial Tenant is making a long-term commitment to this critical redevelopment project and, as one of its largest employers, to the City of Pittsburgh. The Anchor Commercial Tenant commitment is predicated on the successful completion of the related mixed-use project on Block E that includes public parking infrastructure. Accordingly, the G1 project will be developed in conjunction with Block E. Together, these projects will serve as catalysts for future development, investments and partnerships across the Greater Hill District.

The Block G1 project will serve as a cornerstone of Greater Hill District’s growing commercial vitality and will establish critical connections between the Greater Hill District, the downtown and

adjacent neighborhoods. The Greater Hill District is central to the region’s geography and can play a pivotal role in sustaining Pittsburgh’s revitalization. The historic Lower Hill is the gateway to the Greater Hill District’s commercial corridor. This project is vital to reestablishing commercial vibrancy to the Lower Hill.

The Block G1 signature tower will create an initial supply of **modern office space in the mixed-use district to complement the investment in public parking infrastructure and open space development.** The project will become a prominent and recognizable gateway to the Lower Hill along Bedford Avenue. It represents significant private investment in the redevelopment of the Civic Arena Site and will stimulate reinvestment into the Greater Hill District.

The \$200MM, mixed-use project consists of a 24-story modern office tower with a 4-story retail and parking podium on a parcel that is just over an acre in size. Over half an acre of Public Open Space will be developed as part of the overall plan to develop accessible, programmable public assembly areas. The tower project will feature:

- +/- 390,000 square feet of modern office space along with complementary conference and wellness areas for office tenants
 - Over 40% pre-leased to Anchor Commercial Tenant
- +/- 20,000 square feet of dining, fitness and retail banking space across a two-level commercial podium
- +/- 100 space parking garage
- Hardscaped and landscaped terrace areas to complement the overall Public Open Space components of the 28-acre master plan

As envisioned by Gensler, the signature tower anchors this vibrant development while establishing a new presence on the city’s skyline. Its form is carefully sculpted to reflect the unique setting of this highly-visible, easily accessible landmark for the Lower Hill. An expression of crisp verticality dominates the design, visually bridging to skyscrapers in the downtown, **while shifts in massing recognize a relationship to the lower-scale character of adjacent development.** The steps in form create opportunities for outdoor terraces, connecting commercial tenants to the activity of the park and retail space below. The design **establishes Wylie Avenue as an important visual, pedestrian and commercial connector to the Greater Hill District.**

The developer anticipates a third quarter 2020 ground breaking and a late-2021 delivery of the building core and shell, permitting initial tenant occupancy to occur by the third quarter of 2022.

Community Partnership Benefits

The **project promotes many of the goals of the CCIP.** The redevelopment of Block G1 will fund economic development priorities across the Greater Hill District by sharing an equal portion of its 10-year LERTA benefit and create opportunities for minority- and women-owned business enterprises to participate in the pre-development, construction and operation of the mixed-use building.

- Up to **\$7.5 million for the Hill District Reinvestment fund (50% off-site LERTA)**, bringing the combined projected total between the related Block G1 and Block ^E projects to over \$12 million.
 - The Reinvestment Fund will stimulate off-site commercial development and provide investment in support of affordable housing / home ownership in the Greater Hill District.

- The developer and its contractors plan to achieve approximately **30% participation in all contracted work by M/WBE firms.**
 - Business development resources will be made available to interested firms
- The development team is preparing to issue an open Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Block G1 project, highlighting opportunities for equity participation and commercial space tenancy.
- The redevelopment will provide **employment opportunities** to residents of the Greater Hill District during construction and post-construction phases.
- Tower construction will also begin the development of approximately 2.5 acres of **Public Open Space** along Lower Wylie Avenue with retail kiosks and programmable assembly areas.
- Planning for the Tower also includes **extending District Energy to the Centre Avenue Corridor** – to benefit the 28-acre redevelopment as well as the Greater Hill District.
- Additional investments by the development team include (1) **workforce development/capacity building** in coordination with Partner4Work (2) proposed **partnership with the Hill District Federal Credit Union** and (3) the Anchor Commercial Tenant will assist with overall wealth-building goals for the mixed-use development by offering **financial literacy programs** throughout the Greater Hill District.

Sustainability

The project will be a mixed-use development and will be consistent with applicable LEED / energy – efficiency requirements under LEED-ND, the PLDP and the Option Agreement. Best in class sustainability design and standards will be applied to every facet of the development scope. This signature tower will be a LEED certified building that seeks to leverage District Energy infrastructure. Design considerations support the project’s emphasis on environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Preliminary Land Development Plan (PLDP) and Public Open Space

This initial phase is consistent with the overall vision for a mixed-use Master Plan on the former Civic Arena Site. The proposed Conceptual Land Development Plan for this project is consistent with the approved PLDP at the Lower Hill Redevelopment Site and complies with sections of the PLDP related to Uses; Building Types; Minimum and Maximum Heights. The updated master plan (which has been presented to the Hill District Community) identifies the construction of Urban Open Space in the location of the previously envisioned lower portion of Wylie Avenue (Street 5) between Logan Street and Washington Place, which will be submitted as a modification of the PLDP.

The construction of this Urban Open Space will be completed contemporaneously with the development of the tower and the Block E mixed-use project, and will provide a grand public assembly and civic event space to complement the current development of the Cap Park above I-579 just across Washington Place.

Conclusion: Renewed Connections and Energy

The proposed Block G1 project will be an important part of the redevelopment plan to reconnect the historic Lower Hill with the Greater Hill District and the Golden Triangle. It will be the catalyst to restore commercial vibrancy in the Lower Hill and Greater Hill. The new retail suites in the tower podium will attract businesses that will welcome patrons to the Greater Hill District, while supporting the operations of commercial tenants above. The ground floor retail will renew commercial activity along Washington Place and the newly created central green space on Lower Wylie Avenue. The supply of new

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office space promises to not only retain the Pittsburgh-based headquarters of a major financial services company, but also attract other growing commercial enterprises to expand their operations in a reinvigorated Greater Hill District. **The respective Block G1 and Block E projects, with their complementary mix of uses, will create an active hub of energy for the entire Lower Hill district.**

This project also boosts the interconnected vision for the entire mixed-use district. The block's urban design gestures and focus on connection promise to make these ground-up developments welcoming for all. Blurring the lines between the mixed-use blocks and the fabric of the Greater Hill District will create transparency and clear views between Crawford Street and Washington Place. The master planning motto of **"create better; invite all; celebrate together"** is at the core of this project for Block G1.

Again, we believe that no other project of this scale has been developed in the City with the scope of community partnership benefits that this development team has committed to delivering. We look forward to discussing the project further at your upcoming board meeting.

Sincerely,



Boris Kaplan
Vice President of Development
The Buccini / Pollin Group

cc: William Sittig, Esq.
Tracey McCants Lewis, The Pittsburgh Penguins