



February 11, 2021

URA Board Members:

Chair Sam Williamson
Rep. Ed Gainey
Councilmen Daniel Lavelle
Lindsay Powell
Jodi Hirsch

URA Executive Staff:

Greg Flisram, Director
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Via email: daniel.lavelle@pittsburghpa.gov; lindsay.powell@pittsburghpa.gov;
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gflisram@ura.org; dwalker@ura.org; publiccomment@ura.org

RE: Lower Hill Block G1 Status of Non-Compliance with CCIP and GHDM

Dear URA Board and Executive Staff:

On behalf of the Hill District's Development Review Panel (DRP) and the Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC) as the RCO for the Greater Hill District, we offer this update letter of the **status of non-compliance** for the Lower Hill Block G1 Development proposal with regard to the Greater Hill District Master Plan (GHDM) and the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP).

The Role of the Hill CDC, DRP, and RCO:

The mission of the Hill CDC is to work in partnership with residents and stakeholders to create, promote, and implement strategies and programs that connect plans, policies, and people to drive compelling community development opportunities in the Greater Hill District. The Hill CDC is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Greater Hill District Master Plan, specifically addressing any community concerns regarding redevelopment and economic opportunities in the area.

The DRP is the Hill District's unified and comprehensive community review process that gives every Hill District resident a voice in the redevelopment of their neighborhood. It is a partnership with six (6) Hill District Community Based Organizations: Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC), Hill District Education Council (HDEC), Hill District Ministers Alliance (HDMA), Uptown Partners, Hill District Consensus Group (HDCG) and the Center that Cares that streamlines community level review while assuring transparency and sufficient community feedback. This process is facilitated by the Hill CDC Programs and Policy Manager.

The Hill CDC is also the Registered Community Organization (RCO) for the Greater Hill District, the boundaries of which are defined by the GHDM. This project is included in that geographic boundary. **§ 178E.07 RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS** of the RCO Ordinance,

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requires the RCO to establish both “orderly and democratic means for forming representative public input” and a “clear method for reporting to the city, actions which accurately reflect the community’s position.” **The Hill District community has already established both of these requirements in our community review process and has integrated it with the RCO regulatory requirements.** The Hill CDC, in fact, included the DRP process in our RCO application and have communicated to our community that this is the process we would follow to ensure transparency and sufficient implementation of community vision and goals.

DRP Project Status:

In April 2020, **Block G1 received failing scores against both the GHDMP and the CCIP.** With regard to the GHDMP the project received a **75% - C** and with regard to the CCIP the project received a **68% - D**. As you all are well aware by now, a passing score in the Hill District is a minimum 80% - B as we want to ensure that there is **high quality development** in our community that is in **sufficient alignment** with our community’s vision as articulated in our guiding documents. In May 2020, the DRP Committee met with Buccini Pollin Group and Pittsburgh Arena Real Estate Redevelopment/Penguins (Development Team) and gave guidance on the areas of the proposal that the plan scored poorly in, as well as their concerns about the project. The DRP Committee then requested documents to demonstrate progress in these areas prior to presenting again. **Unfortunately, in June 2020 what the Development Team submitted failed to meet the DRP’s requests.** The DRP Committee did extend the invitation to attend the July 2020 DRP Committee meeting to discuss what barriers and challenges the Development Team had to meeting those requests. However, the Development Team declined to attend and instead stated they would do their “best to keep in touch as events progress.”

The Development Team did not reengage the DRP process until November 2020 at which time the DRP Committee reiterated the unmet requests. **In January 2021, the Development Team once again submitted a response that failed to meet the DRP’s requests. The DRP Committee unanimously voted (1 member was absent, but also has a conflict) that the documentation provided to demonstrate progress in the areas of the GHDMP and CCIP where the proposal scored poorly did not evidence sufficient improvement. As such, the project is not prepared for a second presentation that would result in anything other than another failed score.** The DRP Committee once again extended the invitation to attend the February 2021 DRP meeting to discuss what barriers and challenges the Development Team had to meeting those requests. This time, the Development Team agreed to attend and met with the DRP Committee Members. Unfortunately, the Development Team spent little to no time explaining their barriers and challenges. **Instead, the meeting was spent with the DRP Committee members reiterating their requests for a third time.**

The DRP Committee is still awaiting complete response from the Development Team to determine if the project is prepared to present again. As such, progress is stalled.

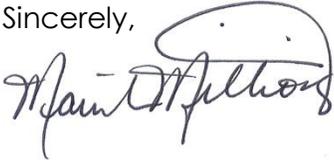
RCO Project Status:

Despite the lack of progress at the DRP level, The Development Team made a request on January 29, 2021 to have a Development Activities Meeting (DAM) for both Block G1 and Block G4. I want to note that a proposal for Block G4 has not yet been submitted to the DRP. **After**

explaining the integration of our process as enumerated above and the lack of progress at the DRP level, the Development Team is insisting on pushing forward with a DAM. I want to be clear that the scheduling of this DAM will be at the objection of the Hill CDC, the RCO as well as the DRP Committee due to the lack of compliance with our community plan and the community benefits agreement for the Lower Hill site.

I thank you for your time and consideration of the following status update and information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marimba Milliones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "M".

Marimba Milliones
President and CEO

Cc:

Daniel Gilman, Mayor's Office
State Representative Jake Wheatley