

**Oakland-Wide Community Meeting**  
**Aug 25, 2020, 6pm**  
**Hosted by OPDC via Zoom and Facebook Live**

**Presentations: CA Ventures/Clark Street Holdings – Preliminary presentation on plans for the former Marathon gas station site. PWSA – current Oakland construction projects and customer assistance programs.**

**Presenters: CA Ventures: Kevin McKeegan - Meyer, Unkovic, and Scott, Jessica Leo – CA Ventures, Jay Silverman, Dwell Design Studio.**

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## **I. Introduction/OPDC updates**

Wanda Wilson, OPDC Executive Director, announced OPDC updates: [food distribution](#) at Frazier Field House and Friendship Community Church continues throughout the week and [Home Repair Assistance programs](#), including the OPDC Façade Grant Program and CLT are available to residents.

Oakwatch's next meeting on September 29. Contact OPDC if you have code violations to report. The University of Pittsburgh has a form for community members to report COVID issues. US Census due date is now September 30 – please complete that now online, by mail, or phone.

Initial materials for engagement on Oakland Plan are on the city's website. The Parking Authority will enforce residential parking permits starting next Tuesday, 8/31.

Pitt News is looking for someone to join their Advisory Board – For more information, go to <http://www.pitt.edu/~pnab/about.html>. If interested, please contact board secretary/treasurer, Terry Lucas, at [trlucas@pitt.edu](mailto:trlucas@pitt.edu).

## **II. Former Marathon gas station site**

Kevin McKeegan introduced Jessica Leo, Director of Design and Development at CA Ventures, and Jay Silverman, architect and managing principal at Dwell Design, before starting the presentation. Based in Atlanta, Dwell has experience in Pittsburgh, working on the second phase of the Arsenal project in Lawrenceville.

Oakland-wide was the first public presentation, they hope this is the start of dialogue to guide the process moving forward. This was a preliminary meeting – the group wanted to come early in the process to get feedback.

The site is the former Marathon gas station on Forbes between McKee and Semple. Made up of five separate tax parcels that will be consolidated at a later date. Zoning requirements – it's in Oakland Public Realm sub-district C. Permitted uses include multi-family, restaurant, retail, and

office. The project was “carefully designed to comply with the zoning code.” They are proposing 102 feet based upon 20% bonus with LEED certification. The code allows 85 feet; the LEED bonus brings them to 102 feet. The project requires Planning Commission approval. They hope to have formal DAM with OPDC in early Dec, planning commission consideration in early 2021.

They envision 296 dwelling units, a mix of studio – three-bedroom. Exact numbers/mix not yet determined. Approximately 7500 square foot office/commercial/retail area. No final design in place yet. No tenants identified. Will have an integral parking garage with 233 spaces. Propose 240 bike spaces.

CA Ventures is a multi-family, residential developer specializing in student housing. Started in 2004 in Champaign, IL. They have projects in 31 states – mostly college and university towns, all towns are “unique, all designs are planned with sensitivity in design.” CA has in-house management as part of the company.

Presenters utilized this [design slide presentation](#). Highlights of possible sustainable features – LEED program is a nationally known premier rating system for sustainable design in the building. They plan to include energy-efficient improvements, green infrastructure (taking care of rainwater, improving the health of residents with fresh air and light in the building, and insulation. Bike amenities - not just bike parking, but also workshop/storage/entry point to the building. Loading dock – the door is large, and will conceal loading when not in use. These are furnished apartments, so no need for big moving trucks. Trash, UPS box trucks will be the primary truck traffic.

**Q:** How far back does the building on McKee go, related to Family House building?

**A:** The building is about 20 feet away from the edge of Family House. They propose an art treatment/interest point at the pedestrian walkway corner. The building extends back about 30 feet on Semple, with a 20-foot setback.

This is a consolidation of five parcels (all under one ownership), at the Marathon Oil site. It includes several smaller parcels, including a parking lot and restaurant that made up a full parcel. The build on Semple Street will extend beyond Fresno Way. The pedestrian connection allows people to still be able to get from Semple to McKee via the connection, even though the building itself will be beyond where people are walking now.

**Q:** On McKee, the vehicular entrance into your property is almost across the street from the hotel entrance?

**A:** The alley at the back of the hotel across the street - our entry is offset by that a little bit.

**Q:** Have you done any investigation into the subsurface, can you plant trees here?

**A:** Our civil engineer did preliminary surveys, but when working in an urban environment, there could be some info not on the surveys we have, we will take a closer look. The city does have street tree planting requirements; we’re trying to accommodate that. This is a very preliminary plan, so there may be some adjustments to this plan.

**Q:** Who is your target market?

**A:** Our target market is students – (primarily due to the location), Pitt. There are no restrictions that you need to be a student – anyone in the community can rent these.

**Q:** Is this building eligible for the residential parking permit program?

**A:** No. It is not in the boundary. It will not be a residence where someone can apply for one.

**Q:** What are the planned materials? There appears to be a lot of cement siding and metal panels.

**A:** The preliminary materials include masonry for the base of residences and commercial space. Go up the building and we plan to use cement panels and metal panel accents, keeping masonry at the base of the building.

**Q:** Can you talk about what you're doing to meet LEED certification? (And explain LEED.)

**A:** LEED stands for "Leadership in Environmental and Energy Efficient Design". It's a program of the United States Green Building Alliance. It's an effort to design in a way that's more environmentally responsible than previously done (particularly commercial buildings).

The city recognizes in non-residential areas, regardless of building usage, you can take advantage of the LEED bonus, which allows an increase in density or height, up to 20% over what the district normally limits. We're seeking an additional 17 feet of height through this.

LEED has a number of different levels – basic, bronze, silver, and platinum. The zoning code doesn't require a particular level; it just requires certification. We will determine which level to pursue after USGBA has a chance to review, inspect, and confirm standards have been met. The code requires that during design, you have to register the project via USGBA, a LEED-certified professional has to be part of the design team, documents have to be confirmed by the USGBA within three years of completion.

The zoning administrator receives registration materials, confirms a LEED professional is on-site, etc. After occupancy, they have to go back and re-confirm all of that to avoid any financial penalties. LEED certification is available to anyone who wants to pursue it. It's in section 915 of the zoning code.

**Q:** Can you speak to minority participation in the project?

**A:** We're not at the point where we're looking at bidding. We will do everything we can to meet the city's requirements and goals for minority participation.

**Q:** Are there any other constraints related to the setback or easements, related to the deed of the property?

**A:** The title insurance company looked at a survey and were satisfied we weren't infringing on anything.

**Q:** Are the units facing McKee multi-story?

**A:** They are single level. The exterior design gives a townhome feel to it.

**Q:** Is a light at Semple at Forbes required?

**A:** Our traffic engineer had preliminary meetings with DOMI and is preparing a report. Preliminary read from DOMI is that that will not require any intersection improvements. The engineering basis for that - if you consider what was going on this property beforehand, a gas station generates more traffic according to an engineer than what a multi-family building of this type will.

**Q:** Will the open space be publicly owned or owned by the developer and the public has access to it? Can you share more details on the pedestrian walkway?

**A:** Privately owned, publicly accessible. There will be city standard street lights, as required. We will probably match treatment in the pedestrian walkway in some way – haven't gotten into that design, yet. Security is a top issue, there will be security cameras in space as well. Probably a combination of building-mounted lights and pedestrian lights in that space.

**Q:** What are the size of units – square footage or different size units?

**A:** At this point, we're still exploring the residential mix; we don't have an exact number of unit types that will be in there, yet.

**Q:** Can you speak to any affordable housing? There is a lack of affordable units in Pittsburgh, generally, and it's really needed in Oakland, as well.

**A:** At this time, the development team is not planning on any dedicated affordable housing. They're not seeking any bonuses or tax incentives related to that at this time. When we get more into unit mixes, there will be rental ranges attractive to a variety of renters.

**Q:** Does the development team want to share any other projects you've done in other places?

**A:** We can send some links to your website and can share that at our next presentation.

**Q:** Have you done a shadow study? What will the impact be on Forbes Avenue in terms of a lack of sunlight/canyon effect?

**A:** No formal shadow study as part of the package.

The feedback form for this project is on the [OPDC website](#).

### **III. PWSA Current construction and customer assistance programs**

OPDC's Community Services Director, Andrea Boykowycz, moderated this portion of the presentation. PWSA representatives included: Rachel Rampa, Senior Public Affairs Coordinator, Manda Metzger, Project Manager – Construction, Mora McLaughlin, Construction Communications Project Manager, and Julie Quigley – Director of Administration.

Metzger started the PWSA presentation. She manages large scale construction for PWSA. Their largest jobs are restorations, they do about 5,000 sites a year, including lead and other programs. She shared a slide featuring [current projects](#).

They are finishing McKee and Semple this week and West Oakland next week. There are about three sinkholes on Atwood being repaired. The lead line schedule is in the presentation slides.

**Q:** Some of the streets are half-completed – what are the plans for excavation, etc.?

**A:** Metzger doesn't manage the lead line, will forward the question to Dan Dunphy who manages that. PWSA work orders range from 400 – 600 homes depending on geographic area. Areas fluctuate throughout neighborhoods.

**A:** I spoke to the project manager who handles the design of future work. Wrapping up the targeted lead line replacement program will be soon focusing on water line replacement. 2021-22 will see the construction of new water mains in West and Central Oakland.

The design phase includes – Oakland Avenue, Parkview, McKee, Coltart, Chesterfield, Aliquippa, and Mohawk. Might be older water mains or smaller size - the standard is 6 – 9 in diameter, older ones can be 4inch. Will have more updates as design continues.

**Q:** Chesterfield residents have a concern with what they're observing in surface deformation, relieved to hear that's on the radar.

Paving schedule - <https://bit.ly/2Qm58z6>

Quigley presented on their customer assistance programs. In response to COVID – PWSA extended **the winter moratorium** and has continued to extend. They are not terminating through at least 9/22. PUC/board will determine what to do in the future. Restored service for about 49 who were shut off before the pandemic.

The **bill discount program** offers a 75% discount on fixed base month charges – water and waste. /waste - \$26.66 per month. Customers can qualify year after year if they meet income requirements. PWSA waived recertification through 12/31/20 – you typically have to re-apply through their partner, The Dollar Energy Fund.

**The hardship grant program** – offers grants up to \$300 to customer-facing termination. Can apply for this, this is something they don't have to pay back.

Waived **sincere effort of payment** through the end of the year.

**Private lead service line replacement** – PWSA offers free lead to people at/below 300% of FPL. Expires in February (or when funding runs out.)

All staff are working from home, and are reachable every Monday – Friday from 8 am – 6 pm at 412-255-2423, #5.

The Dollar Energy Fund starts the income qualification process at 1-866-762-2348. They administer low-income assistance programs for bills and private lead line replacement for PWSA.

**Q:** Can you explain why everyone's utility bills are increasing? Has the state approved an increase?

**A:** PWSA is currently in the middle of a rate case. Community members had the opportunity to speak at hearings in July. There are increases because we are in a rebuilding year. There are 100+-year-old infrastructure, outages, leaking water lines, main repairs/replacements, and lead service line replacements - funds need to come from ratepayers.

PWSA is not investor-owned, it's a municipal authority - every bit of money collected by goes towards paying for all infrastructure repair/improvements.

PWSA has had two positive tests – the water is extremely safe to drink; there is no lead in the system. Orthophosphate stops lead in pipes not replaced yet. PWSA needs to replace clear well, rising main, and large mains throughout the city of Pittsburgh. We are all tasked with bearing brunt of making certain water is safe to drink for generations to come.

**Q:** – is there a structure that PWSA has explored to spreading the cost of repair forwards into the future, like “floating a bond”?

**A:** Yes, PWSA is always repaying existing bonds and looking for that type of fund when its available through Pennvest and others. Municipal bonds are ongoing, but aren't free and need to be repaid.

**Q:** Will the brick roadwork on Chesterfield be restored once completed?

**A:** Yes