

## **Pershing School Reuse Public Meeting - 3/10/2025**

### **Q&A/Comments**

#### **Proposal A: Exact Architects (mixed use – commercial and housing)**

##### **1. Will you use local contractors?**

1. Yes, we pretty much exclusively use local contractors. Sometimes we will have a specialist come in for a specific project component, but most are local. We advertise in all the minority newspapers. We typically have 30-40% MBE or WBE participation on the construction side and a little over 50% on the business/leasing side.

##### **2. Have you had conversations with any non-profit organizations to be included in this development or others you have completed?**

2. Yes, the school district has introduced non-profits to us. We have multiple non-profits leasing space in at least two of projects currently. We are the architect for several non-profits where they own and operate their own buildings. We found you first need approval and site control, then while you're working through the City's process you start having conversations with entities regarding partnering or occupying space.

##### **3. You said on Troost you have rental space starting at \$599. Which building is this? Is this rate still available because I don't know of any rentals in that area for that price? How long is your wait list? Are there housing vouchers?**

3. The Wonder Lofts at 30<sup>th</sup> and Troost. One bedrooms are available for lease in the 600s and they are fully occupied. It is first come, first served and when they are full they are full. We follow the City's guidelines for rentals. We screen and we can accept vouchers.

For the Pershing project, we are aiming at 60-80% AMI. We don't have additional funding sources identified through the City or State that would reduce the rental price.

##### **4. I'm concerned about parking. How are you going to accommodate all the extra parking generated by this development? We can handle a little bit of commercial but not a lot.**

4. Our projects do not use on street parking, we've always included an off street parking lot. The Pershing project would have a new driveway and parking lot for the building. New construction townhomes on the south side would have private driveways and dedicated parking spots. 70-80% of this project will be dedicated to residential.

##### **5. We want the development to be affordable. We don't want to kick people out of this neighborhood.**

5. We complete in-fill projects. We don't tear down buildings or buy people out of the neighborhood. We add where there is vacancy. It will reactive an entire city block. It's a good looking building, it's a good looking neighborhood.

##### **6. How many total units are you proposing?**

6. We plan on approximately 20 apartments and 10 new construction townhomes, so a total of 30. It depends upon the demand. If we talk to the neighborhood and there is more demand for studios or two bedroom, then the numbers will shift. It all costs about the same because we look at cost per square footage. For example, a senior apartment is just an apartment with a grab bar and wider door. It doesn't change the price to build.

**7. We have several low-income residential developments in our neighborhood. They are a huge problem. We need affordable market rate housing. I like your concept.**

7. That is the plan for this project. We are going to design with that in mind. We are going to build nice units with high-end finishes. We plan to do the little things right, like put the water heaters in the basement so people have more square footage.

**8. Are you going to use historic tax credits? New market tax credits? LIHTC?**

8. Yes, we will use historic tax credits, private equity, and bank loan to complete the project. We are not planning to use new market tax credits or LIHTC as part of this proposal.

**9. What is the total development cost?**

9. Around \$7.5 million depending upon what happens with the tariffs.

**10. Have you considered giving the neighborhood a check from your revenue on the project? It would be able to build neighborhood capacity, fund projects, and provide stipends for neighborhood association leadership.**

10. That is a good idea. We've talked about ways to incentivize this project to bring in talent such as teachers, firefighters, public service employees, etc. Perhaps paying for closing costs or something like that. The question would be is it better to incentivize the people already in the community or the people coming into the community. We are in the infant stage of planning and all those things could be considered.

#### **Proposal B: Parker Communities & Petra (housing)**

**11. You said you've had your eyes on the property since 2019. You have not reached out to any of the neighborhood association representatives. If you truly were interested in the neighborhood, you would have reached out to see what people want. I have a problem with people coming into neighborhoods claiming that they care, so watch your tone.**

11. I should've done more leg work in the neighborhood. I visited Councilman Ellington's office in 2021 and we discussed this plan. I sat down with Mayor Lucas to discuss an Eastside Redevelopment Plan. I'm not from this part of KC. I understand the level of distrust. I don't know what's right for you but someone has to try.

**12. Have you been in communication with non-profit organizations? Is there an opportunity for a non-profit to co-locate or use the site?**

12. There are lots of good organizations doing work in the area. There is potential within the development plan for that type of use. For example, the gym might be able to stay in place for

community use as an amenity. My long-term goal for the neighborhood is to improve the neighborhood and the area surrounding Pershing.

**13. Will this plan to develop the neighborhood displace people?**

13. No, we don't want to displace anyone. Even if we are not awarded the Pershing project, I'm still interested in working in the neighborhood and improving housing. I'm not interested in flipping houses to get to \$300K on a check balance sheet and walk away with \$25K in profit. I am interested in getting all the houses to have AC, running water, and improve housing without displacing.

**14. Do you have examples that speak to your development practices working with local contractors or community entities?**

14. The best example would be the Oak Lawn Improvement District in Wichita, KS. When they went through a tornado, I was onsite at 11:30 PM working to fix the problems in real time. Feel free to reach out to Board members in the district. The Board's number is 316-524-0281.

For local contractors, I've been working to get to know folks to engage in the project. One group I like is RK Contractors, 2022 KC Chamber Small Business of the Year. They employ refugees and folks trying to get their lives on track.

I have a personal example of employing an electrician 25 years ago with a bad rap sheet and murder charge but he wanted to clean up his life. I brought him into my home and around my kids. He did great work and proved he was real deal.

**15. In the presentation, you cited an example of transition from homelessness. Can you provide additional information regarding what you've done in the past and how this relates to Pershing?**

15. I'm working with several municipalities in Kansas. You have to approach homelessness from multiple angles and you can't concentrate it in one location. We are not looking to relocate unhoused in mass. But having good quality, affordable housing at the rates proposed for Pershing will allow folks to access housing. The ultimate goal would be to lead folks eventually to single family homes in the area.

**16. How will you improve the houses surrounding Pershing if you are not using revenue from the project to fund the improvements?**

16. You have to take the equity built in a home and use it. For example, you might have someone in a home with an appraised value of \$95K. Four years later, the house condition declines so much it has a zero value. We should take the value trapped in homes, improve the home with it. Allow residents to stay there by funding the home development. There are several ways to do this. You can use the property as collateral to make the improvements.

**17. Who is the other gentleman with you? What can you add?**

17. My name is Tylan Dyer. I'm more of the execution person of the project. It is very important to understand where people make money on projects like this. LIHTC projects generate money on the fees, the rest of it is a 15 year plan that you don't get anything out of it.

**18. The City has programs for upgrading homes without putting the ownership in jeopardy. Sometimes programs like you are describing end up displacing people even when they don't intend to.**

18. I want to have an extended conversation with Blue Hills. Even if I don't get this project, I want to keep this going.

**Proposal C: KCMO Water (green infrastructure)**

**19. Will the community see a difference in the Brush Creek overflow?**

19. Town Fork Creek runs into Brush Creek, so this project will help with the water quality in Brush Creek. In terms of flooding, the flood reduction efforts are overseen by the US Army Corps of Engineers. We work with them but this project at the Pershing school site for Town Fork Creek will not have an effect on the flood reduction measures already constructed for Brush Creek.

**20. The idea of tearing down the building and inserting greenspace like this is basically turning our neighborhood into a suburb. I was so excited to hear you all but then we didn't talk about using the building/site for community education on collecting stormwater or rain barrels or implementing native grasses, etc. There is no empowerment of the Blue Hills neighbors.**

20. The water quality and outreach part of our program is slated to take place at 4800 E 63<sup>rd</sup> Street which is about 7 minutes away. It's still in this area. So, building another structure devoted to water quality education was not proposed for this site.

If you have a chance to go through the Marlborough area at 81<sup>st</sup> and Troost, we tore down buildings there and opened up a big greenspace. The work that we did there was an improvement in the community and we received a lot of positive feedback post-construction. We later installed additional amenities. KCMO Parks & Recreation installed playground equipment, park benches, trash receptacles. We provide the blank slate, then allow the community to drive what happens on the space. The funding that we bring to the table is limited to the water control.

**21. The project in Marlborough (underground) sounds like the inverse of this proposed project (underground) at Pershing. Where else in KC south of the river have you implemented a similar project to this one?**

21. No two projects are exactly the same. We've done something similar on 27<sup>th</sup> Street and at the Blue River Trailhead.

**22. Was this process conducted with environmental justice at the forefront? Did you include a habitat creation? Did you conduct a soil analysis?**

22. Yes, we take environmental justice into consideration and much of this work is taking place because of environmental justice. We partner with the Heartland Conservation Alliance. In terms of plantings or habitats, anything the City installs needs to be properly maintained. We want to make sure what we build is sustainable. No, we have not conducted a soil analysis at this site. We are conducting geotechnical investigations for the overall Daniel Boone project.

**23. Where are the growth opportunities or benefits for residents of Blue Hills?**

23. We complete projects like this and bring other departments to the table. We advocate for connectivity and walkability. The work that we have completed has improved property values. We knew this proposal was a heavy lift (compared to the other proposals) because we were not bringing in housing. KCMO Water builds water infrastructure. This site is ideal for this type of project in the community. If we don't spend \$12M at the Pershing site, we will spend \$12M to complete this necessary project somewhere else.

#### **Questions/Comments for KCPS Staff**

#### **24. Why would you think the KCMO Water services proposal was a good one? Why would you bring that to us?**

24. The school district evaluates proposals based upon the viability of meeting basic established requirements. We don't arbitrarily make decisions for you. We host public meetings, like this one, so you can provide feedback.

Originally, KCMO Water indicated they would be willing to work with developers to incorporate this infrastructure project into another development proposal at the site. However, neither of the other two developers were interested in exploring this encumbrance on the property because it limits their ability to add structures to the site (i.e. townhomes on the south portion).

#### **25. What is your process for getting input from the community prior to receiving the proposals and moving forward with them? You are just springing this on us now. Why didn't you talk to us first?**

25. As we stated at the beginning of the meeting tonight, we've been talking with the Blue Hills Neighborhood Association since 2011. We didn't solicit proposals until we heard from the community. The neighborhood feedback is up on the website if you did not attend those previous meetings. We've continued to have conversations with the neighborhood. In the last year, KCPS staff has been in communication with the neighborhood association leadership and attended neighborhood association meetings.

We can't make the projects come forward. We can try to encourage folks to be responsive to community desires, but we can't create the ideal scenario projects. We receive proposals, vet the viability, then bring them to meetings like this one. We don't make the decisions for you. We want to have complete projects with details that you can consider meaningfully. We don't want to bring you half cooked ideas that will never happen. We get lots of proposals from folks with great intentions but no capacity to get anything done. These proposals were shared tonight because we believe they are viable, but we need your feedback. Please complete a feedback form:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/pershing](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/pershing)