

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 02/20/2026)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: UIF Campus, 2731 N Charles St	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Perry Hilltop Citizens Council [PHCC] Fineview Citizens Council [FCC] Perry South and Fineview residents Applicants [Architect] Urban Impact Foundation [Owner] DCP
Parcel Number(s): 46-E-29	
ZDR Application Number: BDA-2026-04946	
Meeting Location: Virtual on Zoom	
Date: August 20, 2026	
Meeting Start Time: 6:00 pm	
Applicant: Draw Collective & Urban Impact Foundation	Approx. Number of Attendees: 19
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): ZBA [Zoning Board of Adjustment]; To be reviewed for Renovation, Demolition, New Construction & Parking Reconfiguration.	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

During the Development Activities Meeting, representatives of Urban Impact Foundation (UIF) and its project architects from Draw Collective presented a proposed renovation, demolition, and new construction project at UIF's 2731 North Charles Street campus. Urban Impact opened with background on its mission and programming: a North Side-based nonprofit that has operated for over 30 years. They served approximately 2,425 students in the last fiscal year across more than 60 programs in four areas: athletics, education, workforce development ("Options"), and performing arts, and serve over 27,000 meals/snacks annually to help address food insecurity. Program staff are required to live on the North Side, and the organization also hosts community-wide events (block parties, a Christmas event, etc.) reaching over 7,300 additional people annually.

The site at 2731 North Charles Street includes two structures: an early-1900s brick masonry building fronting the street, and a concrete masonry unit ("gray") building behind it, adjacent to a natural rock cliff. Heavy tree-cover currently obscures street views of both buildings. The proposed scope is to renovate and retain the historic brick building with a new addition (elevator and stairs), demolish the gray CMU building, and construct a new building further back on the site. Elevations for all sides of the renovated building/addition and the new rear building were presented. Both buildings will house school-age and summer programming for up to approximately 200 students, in multi-purpose spaces (classrooms, dance/drama, a maker space, and gross-motor/athletic space).

The site plan provides 23 on-site parking spaces and code-compliant landscaping placed to fit the surrounding community's character. The main entrance will shift from the building's right side to the new left-side addition, creating an organized drop-off/pick-up loop; the existing gate will remain but become manual. Sidewalks along North

Charles Street and Lynwood connect the campus, with bicycle parking and a nearby bus stop supporting multiple modes of travel (shuttles, transit, walking, biking, cars).

Operations will generally run weekdays for after-school and summer programming, with limited weekend use. Exterior lighting and an illuminated sign are planned (signage permitted separately); anticipated noise is limited to drop-off/pick-up traffic and occasional outdoor set-building; no odors are anticipated, with daily trash removal and weekly dumpster service. The meeting also included substantial discussion about the recent tree removal near the site's rock face, its impact on the adjacent Ballfield Farm/Allegheny Land Trust property and the community, erosion and hillside stability, and the faith-based identity of UIF's campus partner, the Pittsburgh Project.

Discussion

Topic / Issue	Recap
- Environmental Impact - Tree Removal / Erosion	Concern: Roughly two dozen trees were removed near the hillside/rock face behind the program building, including some located on the adjacent Ballfield Farm/Allegheny Land Trust property, not owned by Urban Impact. Concerns raised about loss of tree canopy, resulting erosion risk, and rocks/debris coming down the hillside. Who asked: Ballfield Farm representatives Applicant response: UIF staff explained the tree removal addressed a safety hazard (a vehicle had previously been damaged by a falling limb, and dead trees were falling onto the sidewalk); some trees were removed near an unclear property boundary and UIF acknowledged that removal crossed onto Ballfield Farm's property, apologizing for the error. A tree company has since been assigned to plant deep-rooting grass to help stabilize the soil. UIF stated there are no further tree removal plans and expressed willingness to meet on-site with Ballfield Farm to discuss additional plantings (e.g., native, low-growing vegetation) to secure the hillside.
- Permitting - Stormwater, Erosion & Tree Replacement	Concern/Comment: What review or replacement requirements apply to the tree removal and hillside condition? Who asked: Resident DCP response: DCP staff noted that a stormwater permit (which includes environmental and erosion review) is required, though not before the DAM or ZBA hearing; it will be reviewed by the City separately. The zoning reviewer explained that under city code, removed trees with a trunk diameter over 12 inches located within the project parcel must be replaced in equal measure or a fee paid to the city, and that DCP will request a tree survey from the applicant identifying which trees were present and which were removed. A geotechnical report was not required for this application because the new construction does not extend into the landslide-prone hillside area, but such a report could still be required at the building-permit (PLI) stage if deep foundations affect the hillside.
- Community Concerns - Landscaping & Ecology	Concern/Comment: Concern that the presentation framed existing trees as an obstruction ("obscuring views" of the building) rather than an ecological asset, and a request for more native/low-impact planting to help stabilize the hillside, in a manner consistent with Ballfield Farm's organic, chemical-free land stewardship. Who asked: Ballfield Farm representatives Discussion: UIF representatives reiterated their willingness to meet with Ballfield Farm to identify appropriate plantings. The DCP staff suggested this could be a starting point for collaboration between UIF and Ballfield Farm and recommended native plants/trees rather than grass alone for greater ecological benefit. A UIF staff member described related tree-planting/urban-gardening programming the organization has run with Perry High School students (e.g., over 100 trees planted in Riverview Park to address erosion) as an example of the organization's broader environmental engagement.

Topic / Issue	Recap
- Community Concerns - Faith-Based Identity	Concern: The presentation did not mention the faith-based nature of the campus's programming (associated with the Pittsburgh Project), raising a question of whether that identity was being minimized. Who asked: Ballfield Farm Representative Applicant response: UIF confirmed the organization and its campus partner remain faith-based; the omission from the presentation was unintentional, and UIF apologized for the impression it created.
- Transportation - Site Circulation	Concern/Comment: How will pedestrians move through the site once inside the complex (as opposed to sidewalks along the public streets)? Who asked: DCP Applicant response: A walkway runs along the left side of the property, connecting from the public sidewalk to the new main entrance located in the addition to the renovated building; sidewalks along both North Charles Street and Lynwood connect all of UIF's buildings.
- Transportation - Parking / Drop-off & Pick-up	Concern/Comment: What are the program hours, and how much vehicle traffic (cars) is expected during drop-off and pick-up? Who asked: PHCC Applicant response: Program times vary by day; for example, a roughly 60-student tutoring program (Mondays/Wednesdays) might generate an estimated 20 cars at drop-off/pick-up. A larger, roughly 200-student performing arts academy program (Thursdays, 4:30–8:00 pm) would not have all students on-site at once. Generally, programs run from about 4:00–6:00 pm during the school year (none starting before 4:00 pm or ending after 8:00 pm on school nights), and the summer camp runs 8:30 am–4:30 pm, Monday–Friday. Many students carpool, and caregivers typically do not remain on-site, making it primarily a drop-off/pick-up pattern.
- Site Design - Parking Count & Landscaping	Concern/Comment: How much on-site parking is provided, and what landscaping/paving is planned? Who asked: PHCC Applicant response: The site plan provides 23 total on-site parking spaces. Five trees are planned on-site (meeting code requirements), placed in strategic locations to fit the character of the surrounding community. Some repaving is planned; the applicant is working with the city on paving materials and had hoped to use more gravel, but is balancing that preference against city requirements.
- Building Design - Accessibility	Concern/Comment: Will the renovated and new buildings be accessible? Who asked: PHCC Applicant response: Yes. Both buildings will be 100% accessible; the new addition to the renovated brick building will include an elevator.
- Permitting - Signage	Concern/Comment: Is there any information yet on future signage for the buildings? Who asked: PHCC Applicant/DCP response: Signage will be covered under a separate permit; UIF is working with a signage consultant. DCP staff clarified that most signage would not require a separate DAM, though a larger sign could require a Staff Design Review (SDR) and CDAP review, and potentially a ZBA application, depending on its size, this project's overall design already went through internal Staff Design Review.

Topic / Issue	Recap
- Site Scope - Adjacent Gravel Lot	Concern/Comment: Is the gravel parking lot at the upper corner of the campus, and prior removal of overhanging trees along its perimeter, part of this development application? Who asked: Ballfield Farm Representative Applicant response: No, that gravel lot and associated tree work are separate from, and not part of, this development application.
Timeline & Next Steps	Concern/Comment: What is the anticipated schedule for approvals, and how can the community continue to weigh in? Who asked: PHCC Discussion: The project is anticipated to be heard by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on October 1, 2026. UIF requested a letter of support; the PHCC board will discuss and vote on whether to extend a letter of support at its board meeting on September 15, 2026. The community was encouraged to continue sharing comments, questions, and concerns with DCP or PHCC ahead of the ZBA hearing.

Link to Video Recording (if available): N/A

Planner completing report: [NT]