

# PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE PLANS DISPLAY

## Lower Hill (Mellon Arena) Redevelopment Project

### Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MAY 13, 2010

## Comment Summary

**Purpose of this Comment Form** - This form is to supplement the Public Open House Plans Display format by providing an opportunity for additional informal input into the project development process. Additional available space is provided at the end of the form for comment on areas of interest other than those identified. Due to the complexity of the project development process where the Sports & Exhibition Authority must weigh many factors in making its decisions, it must be understood that the comments provided are for consideration purpose and do not constitute a vote or referendum on the process.

The Plans Display was attended by **55** people. A total of **18** Comment Forms were completed and returned during the meeting. One comment was received via mail after the meeting, for a total of **19** Comment Forms. The Comment Forms are summarized as follows:

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|   | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Somewhat Agree</u> | <u>Somewhat Disagree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Not Applicable</u>                    |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 1. The open house displays were informative.                              | 10           | 7                     | 1                        | 0               | 0  |
| 2. Information was presented clearly.                                     | 6            | 7                     | 2                        | 1               | 0  |
| 3. Project team members were knowledgeable and helpful.                   | 11           | 3                     | 2                        | 0               | 0  |
| <b>4. With which group(s) do you most align yourself on this project?</b> |              |                       |                          |                 |  |
| General Community / Individual - 6  |              |                       |                          |                 | Mellon Arena Preservation Community – 8* |
| Organization - 1  |              |                       |                          |                 | Development Community - 0                |
| Hill District Community - 9   |              |                       |                          |                 | Other (Please explain) - 6               |

\*Note: Two (2) of the 8 respondents who selected “Mellon Arena Preservation Community” crossed out “Preservation” and wrote “Reuse.”

**Explain:**

1. Keeping the Arena intact and using it for public use.
2. Organization – Hill Consensus Group, Resident - Middle Hill
3. I believe if everyone put emotion aside, the right choice would be clear... to transform the Mellon into a positive development.
4. [Architectural/historical] - I support saving the Mellon Arena and re-using it in plan for development.
5. Reuse the Igloo!
6. Reuse the Igloo

**5. Each Mellon Arena Development Option needs to be considered the following items. Please select 4 of the following “need to consider items” that you feel are most important?\***

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Compatibility with Community Assets - 3             | Pedestrian & Transit Connections - 4   |
| Harmony with Surrounding Community - 11             | Economic Benefit - 4                   |
| Restore Community Fabric that Pre-dated Arena - 5   | Employment & Housing Opportunities - 4 |
| Urban Design - 6                                    | Tax Revenue - 4                        |
| Green (Environmental & Economic Sustainability) - 7 | Asset to Community & City - 10         |

\*Note: Two (2) of the respondents selected fewer than four items, 3 selected more than four items, and 1 did not answer the question.

**Comment:**

1. *Ideas for how to bring business and people to the area with retail and destinations was not addressed at the meeting even when directly asked.*
2. *Make the Mellon Arena and its site into an asset to Pittsburgh and its community. It should continue to be used and enjoyed.*
3. *The Arena could be used as a way to inform and teach people about what the redevelopment of the '60's did and how it affected the community much like leaving part of the Berlin Wall was left to make sure people never forget.*
4. *Keeping everything in balance is the important.*
5. *Unique asset for the community.*

**6. Including "Do Nothing" Option, five development options or alternatives are presented (listed below). Are there other options or alternatives that do not impact the Arena that you think should be considered?**

- Option 1 - Do Nothing
- Option 2 – Preserve Arena (for Continued Use as Multi-Purpose Arena)
- Option 3 – Arena ReUse & Site Development
- Option 4 – Reconstruct Arena (for Continued Use as Multi-Purpose Arena)
- Option 5 – Arena Demolition & Site Development

**Other Options to Consider:**

1. *A destination Center with parking – Canada theme – restaurants, specialty, retail.*
2. *Not really sure what that question asks.*
3. *Option 3 (Where is option 2 and 4?)*
4. *Option 2- Make it more useful for the other types of uses, continue to use for children's activities, schools.*

Note: More than half of the respondents selected an existing option for this question, rather than suggesting other options. The options that were circled are as follows:

- Option 1 – 1
- Option 2 – 1
- Option 3 – 6
- Option 4 – 1
- Option 5 – 2

**7. Of the three options still under consideration (including "Do Nothing"), which do you prefer and why?**

|                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Option 1 – Do Nothing | Option 3 – Arena ReUse & Site Development | Option 5 – Arena Demolition & Site Development |
| 0                     | 14  | 4  |

**Comment:**

1. *[Option 5] - Too costly for upkeep and renovations, has been neglected without proper maintenance for the past 20 years that I have worked there.*
2. *[Option 3] - Arena is a shrinking mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century building that reflects Pittsburgh's industrial past. Careful redevelopment as a community resource benefits neighbors and visitors.*
3. *[Option 3] - Saves taxpayer dollars, keeps Pittsburgh unique, and most importantly, creates added value, which in the end will bring greater economic benefit to the Hill Community.*
4. *[Option 3]- Preserving and reusing an architectural icon in ways that 'enhance' the Hill District and Downtown benefits all concerned parties and develops a new, more positive history.*
5. *[Option 3] – The Mellon Arena is a significant and important piece of architecture and local history. It needs to be reused as a place that serves the community, the Hill District, and all of Pittsburgh.*
6. *[Option 3] – We can come to a compromise so people in the Hill and the rest of the city can gain from redevelopment of the area.*
7. *[Option 3] – Option 3 is the only efficient way to use the area.*
8. *[Option 3] – Arena is a public asset and should be "preserved" in its basic form if not specific function as a continuing destination for the Hill and others. A plan without the Arena is NOT an asset and the location just becomes another street.*

**8. If the Mellon Arena were to remain, what uses do you feel would be most appropriate?**

Active recreation (ice skating, soccer, exercise, etc) - 9

General and flexible public open space - 10

Hotel development within a portion of the Arena - 5

Parking garage - 0

Other (Please explain) - 4

Note: Six (6) respondents did not answer this question.

**Explain:**

1. I cannot envision reuse.
2. Mixed commercial development including parking, shops, open market space to draw people from all neighborhoods including the Hill District and downtown.
3. All uses that are compatible with the community and the Arena!
4. There is potential for an Indoor/Outdoor park where the shell can close in winter and open in summer. This takes full advantage of the structure and creates a destination.
5. Needs to go.
6. Community center for youth, after school programs, summer programs, classes, tutoring, recreation/athletic activities and gatherings (like Chicago's Gary Comer Youth Center).
7. Implement community input process with highest and best re-uses.
8. Public park space.
9. Used for Special Events (church functions); open for other out of town conferences, for community events [illegible]
10. Open flexible space will accommodate all possible uses versus being dependent on some commercial venture.
11. Indoor children's playground for winter play. Water park. Biosphere.

**9. If the Mellon Arena were to be removed, what do you think should be done to memorialize its historical significance?**

Photographic Recordation - 3

Informational signs & plaques - 5

Public display of important Arena remnants - 4

Recycling of building materials - 4

Private reuse of Arena remnants - 5

Other (Please explain) - 2

Note: Nine (9) respondents did not answer this question.

**Explain:**

1. I don't think it should be removed. It can develop more jobs.
2. An economically self-sustaining building on one of the green spaces or close to the amphitheater that has a green exterior (materials) and a reused steel interior. The visitor's/museum center would contain documents and photos of all areas affected by urban renewal (Hill, Northside and Homewood).
3. Auction contents of hockey Arena to general public.
4. None- keep it!
5. As far as I am concerned, this is not a valid option.
6. It should never be removed. If you do then there is nothing that can make it right. Nothing.
7. Do not remove, make it a historical site.
8. Not an option. Nothing that can be built there will ever be as important as what is already there.

**10. Please use the remaining space to expand on comments provided above or to provide input on other issues.**

1. I don't think it should be removed. It can develop more jobs.
2. A childcare center could be opened in the place of the igloo club in the area of B21, 22 and 23.
3. A roller-skating and ice skating rink for our children to have a place to go because all you have to do is put down the basketball floor.
4. A parents' resource center.
5. Keep the truck pulls, motocross and the Circus in the building.
6. Also you may bring back the Sportsman Show.
7. Build affordable homes from Crawford Street down to Mario Lemieux Place.
8. I am against the parking garages from Crawford to Lemieux.
9. These are things I want to benefit the Hill residents as they can also have stores inside of the Arena. We also would like the residents to be involved in the redevelopment as workers.

10. *Create new visitor's center in the area of the Arena/other retail area – restaurants, hotel, other themed businesses to promote hockey as a sport and its origins in Canada. Concerts in the new Arena – Shania Twain, comedy performances – can provide monetary funds to assist nonprofits in uptown and the Hill.*
11. *In redevelopment, the “clear slate” urban renewal history should be exposed and honored – building the Arena the way it was done was a mistake, but now the Arena means many things to many people. Getting rid of the massive parking lot surrounding the Arena should help to re-establish the lower Hill as a viable community. Not crazy about the “Crawford Cliff” concept though – do we really need all those garages?*
12. *The “process” for approval has not been addressed. I would like to know if there is potential for other architectural firms and organizations to develop/submit schemes for Reuse and Redevelopment of the Arena. I work for Maclachlan, Cornelius and Feloni Architects (local Pittsburgh firm). There is interest in the firm to get involved, yet we are not sure how, or who to talk to. There is a unique structure the development of which is only limited by the creativity of the individuals making the decisions.*
13. *I am a lifelong resident of the Hill District over 60 years. As a young girl I witnessed my classmates at Letsche School disappear as a direct result of Urban Renewal. The Civic Arena leaves a bad taste in my mouth. The community needs to be made whole. Restore the street grid and construct mixed income housing and businesses.*
14. *Pittsburgh is a layered city with rich history and always looks forward to make a better city. Mistakes were made in Mellon Arena project but they were urban planning, government mistakes, not architectural. The same building can be reused as a center piece for a better development, better than it ever was before. It can turn around the pains of the Hill District and transform them, correct them into something to be proud of. Pittsburgh should build on its history, not erase it. This has been done in Portland, Memphis and Austin to convert an area into a community asset. It can be, it has been done. We can do it in Pittsburgh too. It's a good story we Pittsburghers would be proud to tell.*
15. *Errors in presentation content. Arena reuse plan for Wylie Avenue IS ADA-compliant. Your info is incorrect! No elevation required. Explanation of connectivity glosses over the fact that NONE of these plans improve or affect in any way vehicular or pedestrian access to downtown.*
16. *Why hasn't the Mellon been registered as a historical site yet?*
17. *Definitely must eliminate the sea of parking around the Arena!*
18. *Should remove solid panels to create large skylight areas. Could become a huge atrium that could be in filled with all sorts of uses. Residential, stores, hotel, playground, etc.*
19. *Transportation hub for light rail between Oakland, Hill, Downtown, Airport, and even the North Hills and South Side.*

Thank you for your time and cooperation in providing input on the Mellon Arena Redevelopment Project. For additional information on the Lower Hill (Mellon Arena) Redevelopment project, visit [www.pgh-sea.com](http://www.pgh-sea.com). If you need additional time to complete the form, you can complete it at your convenience and send it to the address below by **May 20<sup>th</sup>**, 2010.

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