

EXCERPT FROM REPORT

VIII. SUMMARY FINDING

Development Options Advanced for Further Consideration

Options 1, 3 and 5 were advanced for further consideration.

- Option 1 – “Do Nothing” (Mothball Arena) is required to be advanced as a baseline condition to which other development options may be compared. This Option avoids adverse effects to the Mellon Arena.
- Option 3 – Arena Reuse and Site Development is advanced for further consideration as an alternate development option that minimizes the adverse effect to the Mellon Arena.
- Option 5 – Arena Demolition and Site Development would adversely affect the Mellon Arena by removal. This option is advanced for further consideration.

In the Interested Parties process of the assessment, evaluation and comparison of development options, the effectiveness of each development option in addressing key need issues was considered and the results are included in Development Options Comparison Matrix (See Figure 7). Option 1 “Do Nothing” does not effectively address the identified issues needed to be considered by each development option. Both Options 3 and 5, to some degree, effectively address the identified need issues as follows:

- The perimeters or edges of the proposed mixed-use development are compatible with adjacent community assets.
- The proposed mixed-use development is harmonious with the surrounding community in that it transitions from mainly residential uses near Crawford Avenue to office and commercial uses towards the downtown.
- The proposed mixed-use development is harmonious with the surrounding community in that it transitions in scale with lower buildings near Crawford Avenue and larger building towards the downtown.
- Accessibility and opportunities for transit connections are enhanced.
- Visual connectivity is enhanced between the Hill District and the downtown.
- Site developments provide housing and employment opportunities.
- Site redevelopment would be LEED-based for long-term energy efficiency.
- Provides for connectivity between the Hill District and Washington Place.

Option 3 – Arena Reuse and Site Development: Advantages and Disadvantages

The advantages of Option 3 – Arena Reuse and Site Development over Option 1 (“Do Nothing”) and Option 5 (Arena Demolition and Site Development) include:

- A “Minimized Adverse Effect” to Mellon Arena due to the retention of character defining features as part of the repurposed building.
- Takes advantage of the embodied energy contained in the portion of the existing Arena structure to be reused.
- Incorporates the Arena as an urban focal element.
- Provides the opportunity to have 2.1 acres of contiguous public open space in and around the Arena for major events.

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- Reduces infrastructure-related costs by building fewer streets.
- Opportunity exists for the application of historic preservation tax credit for restructuring the Arena, providing the Arena can be operated as a “for profit” enterprise.

The disadvantages of Option 3 – Arena Reuse and Site Development over the other development options considered include:

- Proposed 150-unit hotel is of a non-standard design including the single-loading of rooms (i.e. rooms located on one side of the service hallway) as a result of being located inside and back against the leaves of the dome roof and support arm, restricting available room viewsheds to a single direction. Construction within the dome including access by equipment and materials present a challenge. Non-standard hotel design with single-loaded rooms result in increased construction and operational costs.
- Pedestrian-only Wylie Avenue extension between the Hill District and Lemieux Place is estimated to be a 12% slope, requiring the use of tiered steps, and is therefore not ADA compliant. Vertical access between Crawford Avenue and Lemieux Place is to be provided by elevators.
- Establishes a partial, discontinuous street grid system that does not provide a direct connection between Crawford Avenue and Lemieux Place and that may not be adequate to meet vehicular demands.
- Annual operational and maintenance costs of the Arena would need to be paid for by Arena users, absorbed by the private investors affecting their overall profitability, paid through public subsidies, or through a combination of all three.
- Arena’s presence in the central portion of the site and the elevation differential between the Arena and Crawford Avenue presents constraints to construction in terms of available development space, construction approach and staging, grading, marketability and contracting.
- Green space and open space is mainly planned to occur as an organic cover over man-made structures (i.e., the Crawford Overlook located on the parking garage structure and open space within the restructured Arena) presenting potential challenges to landscaping and sustainable tree growth.

Option 5 – Arena Demolition and Site Development: Advantages and Disadvantages

The advantages of Option 5 – Arena Demolition and Site Development over Option 1 (“Do Nothing”) and Option 3 (Arena Reuse and Site Development) include:

- Establishes a street grid system, reminiscent of the grid that pre-dated the Arena, consisting of four through-streets for vehicular and pedestrian traffic connecting with the perimeter roads (Bedford Avenue, Crawford Avenue, Centre Avenue, and Washington Place).
- All street/pedestrian corridors are at a grade of 8% or less and are ADA compliant.
- Physical connectivity is enhanced with the establishment of a through-street grid system connecting with the perimeter roads (Bedford Avenue, Crawford Avenue, Centre Avenue, and Washington Place) and providing access flexibility.
- Provides for a conventional urban street and block pattern.
- Parking garages and surface parking is provided throughout in support of the proposed development amenities.
- Parks and open space are dispersed and associated with the street/pedestrian corridors where landscape and tree sustainability is less problematic.

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- The removal of the Arena allows for a minimally constrained construction site eliminating major challenges to construction.
- Nine separate urban blocks enhance marketability, contracting and construction sequencing.
- Proposed 150-unit hotel is of a conventional design including the double-loading of rooms (i.e. rooms located on either side of the service hallway) that minimize construction costs and maximize operational efficiency.
- With the removal of the Arena, more design flexibility exists relative to development densities and desirable transition in building massing and scale.
- Provides a total public economic benefit over a 10-year period of approximately \$103,500,000; approximately \$44,000,000 more than Option 3.

The disadvantages of Option 5 – Arena Demolition and Site Development over the other development options considered include:

- Mellon Arena would be removed resulting in an Adverse Effect to this historic resource.
- Additional costs (currently undetermined) associated with the design and implementation of suitable measures to mitigate the loss of the Arena and memorialize its historical significance would need to be considered.
- Removal of the Arena foregoes the opportunity to capitalize on the embodied energy contained in the existing Arena building.
- Greater infrastructure-related costs due to more streets.

Identification of a Preferred Alternative

Based on the information presented in this report and input received from the Interested Parties and public, the Option 5 – Arena Demolition and Site Development is identified as the preferred development option. The advantages of Option 5 – Arena Demolition and Site Development over Option 3 – Arena Reuse and Site Development, the reasons for it having been identified as the preferred development option are as follows:

- Removal of the Arena allows for the establishment of a street grid system that is reminiscent of the grid that pre-dated the Arena, consists of four through-streets for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, connects with the perimeter roads (Bedford Avenue, Crawford Avenue, Centre Avenue, and Washington Place), and effectively removes physical barriers and provides flexibility in access.
- Conventional urban blocks enhance the opportunity for the orderly grouping and segmentation of specific uses into an efficient and memorable land use pattern, effectively accommodate a high-density, mixed-use development, and allow for the location of parking garages and surface parking lots throughout the development.
- Removal of the Arena allows for the adjustment of site gradients and the establishment of linear pedestrian corridors that are ADA compliant.
- Results in a higher public economic benefit.
- Removal of the Arena allows for the establishment of conventional urban blocks that enhance the marketability of the site.
- Removal of the Arena provides for an unencumbered development site with flexibility in grading.

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Refinement Notes:

Throughout the process, suggested refinements to Option 3 were considered. OREA was directed to consider the effect of these refinements on the economic analysis. These refinements include the following:

1. Increase the mixed-use development densities of Option 3 to be similar to Option 5.
2. Eliminate the hotel from the Arena footprint and:
 - a. Leave the surrounding Option 3 densities the same (lower density as shown in the existing Option 3 plans), but provide a public park in the arena footprint to be used for the Three Rivers Arts Festival, the local community and the surrounding businesses; or
 - b. Relocate the hotel to outside of the Arena footprint, but within the Area of Potential Effect and provide a public park in the arena footprint. Retain the ring of the Arena which supports the roof, and retain the roof.
3. Eliminate and/or relocate the hotel and provide an indoor market in the arena footprint

In consideration of these proposed refinements, it was agreed that the refinements would be considered conceptually, without commensurate changes to figures, plans, and renderings previously prepared for Option 3.

The findings are as follows:

1. Increases to development density in Option 3 would result in a higher public economic benefit than the lower density analysis but still significantly less than Option 5. Maintenance and operation costs associated with the Arena reuse would still be required. The harmony with the surrounding community and urban design issues may be affected by the higher scale of buildings to accommodate the increased density.
2. Eliminating the hotel and providing a public park in the arena footprint would result in the loss of the anticipated hotel (thereby reducing job creation and tax benefits) previously considered under Option 3. Although difficult to quantify, it is acknowledged that incorporating green spaces into development plans may increase the value of the development. Creation of a large park is not inconsistent with a similar refinement that could be made to Option 5 but a determination of optimum size of a park or parks based upon the needs to be served would be required.

Relocating the hotel elsewhere in the APE would either increase the development density; or displace other programmatic uses (thereby reducing job creation and tax benefits.) If it increased the development density, there would be no change to the economic analysis, but the harmony with the surrounding community and urban design issues may be affected by the higher scale of buildings to accommodate the increased density. If it displaces other programmatic uses, it would result in a greater disparity in the economic analysis.

All other advantages and disadvantages of the respective development options presented in this draft report are unchanged.

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3. Eliminating the hotel and providing an indoor/outdoor market in the arena footprint would result in reduced job creation and tax benefits and would also require an additional public cost to renovate/construct the space.

All other advantages and disadvantages of the respective development options presented in this draft report are unchanged.