

REPORT ON PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA AND COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA REGARDING THE PROPOSED HEALTH CENTER ON THE FRIENDS HOSPITAL CAMPUS IN NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

A. Legal Authority

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health has the legal authority to establish, maintain and operate city health centers as set forth in the City Code. *See Philadelphia Home Rule Charter §5-300.*

B. Procedural Summary

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) began planning for the development of additional health centers over ten years ago, as the growth in demand for primary care in the Northeast has been well documented. Since 2018-2019, the City, with assistance from consultants, evaluated 44 sites, with seven identified as finalists. Initially, the Friends Hospital campus was chosen as the most ideal location. However, it was also discovered in recent years that PDPH would be able to secure enough funding to build two health centers, and a second site was proposed at the Frankford Transportation Center. To build on the Friends Hospital Campus, approval was needed from the Philadelphia Historical Commission to demolish the Lawnside House, a vacant building on the campus.

In the summer of 2023, the Scattergood Foundation, owners of the Friends Hospital Campus, and the City of Philadelphia were given approval to demolish the Lawnside House on the Friends Hospital Campus to accommodate the site plan of the proposed health center. This approval solicited inquiries and responses from the surrounding community. As a result, Council Member Lozada held six public meetings to inform community members of the proposal, answer questions, and solicit feedback. These were held between December 2nd, 2023, and April 2nd, 2024, in various neighborhoods across the Northeast. Notice for these meetings was posted on Councilmember Lozada’s social media, including Facebook and Instagram, and on the City Council website. Notifications were also sent out by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project and other Community Based Organizations.

C. Summary of Proposed Health Centers

Background

Primary care, also called preventative care, is essential for good health, on an individual and community level. Primary care reduces rates of illness and premature death. It is also significantly cheaper, for individuals and for health systems, to prevent health conditions than it is to treat them after they have developed. Despite the benefits of primary care, some residents in Philadelphia do not receive it, usually because the costs are prohibitive, the locations are inaccessible, or there is not sufficient provider availability. Some communities in Philadelphia do not have enough primary care providers to serve the population; the areas with the fewest primary care providers are more commonly low-income and have high proportions of racial/ethnic minorities. PDPH’s mission is to reduce this inequity, and fill gaps in primary care services through the expansion of PDPH’s health centers, operated by the Ambulatory Health Services division.

City health centers provide a full range of primary medical and support services to patients. The health centers accept walk-in patients but require appointments for most services. There are currently eight health centers operating throughout the city. They offer a wide range of services, including:

- Comprehensive adult and pediatric primary care
- On-site pharmacy and laboratory
- On-site radiology, mammography
- Dental care
- Women's health services, including prenatal care
- Podiatry services
- Insurance counselors
- Health navigators
- Behavioral health consultants
- Specialty referrals
- Immunizations

The health centers are affordable and accessible for all Philadelphia residents. They offer a sliding scale fee of \$5-\$20 for medical visits, with no additional costs for lab tests, X-rays, or other services. The health centers provide services to Philadelphia residents regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. Childhood immunizations are offered free of charge and are available at appointments and for walk-ins; health center nursing staff also coordinate with School District nursing staff to ensure children have their required vaccines.

For children and adults who are uninsured, or underinsured (meaning the out-of-pocket costs, even with insurance coverage, remain prohibitive), the health centers are a great option. The health centers are also an invaluable resource for people experiencing lapses in insurance coverage, which might occur, for example, after losing or changing jobs.

Proposal Justification

There is a documented need for additional primary care services in the Northeast region of Philadelphia. In the Northeast, there is only one existing city health center, Health Center 10, located at 2230 Cottman Ave. The only other federally qualified health center in the area is a small site that serves about 2,000 patients per year. The current wait time for a new patient appointment at Health Center 10 is 12 months for an adult and five to six months for a child, which is significantly longer than at any other health center in the city. These wait times create an unacceptable barrier to healthcare access. The nearest city health center for many residents is in North or West Philadelphia, and many are unable to utilize these centers because of the burdens (travel time, gas or transit fees, childcare, etc.) associated with the trip.

The Northeast has a rapidly growing population and has high rates of uninsurance compared to other regions of the city. Many neighborhoods in the Northeast have also experienced increases in poverty over the past several years. Lack of access to care has negative impacts on residents and families, ranging from the development of preventable health conditions to school absences because of missing vaccinations.

PDPH strives to achieve health equity in Philadelphia. This means all people across the city should have the ability to achieve their highest level of health. People cannot be their healthiest selves without access to quality, comprehensive primary care.

Proposed Sites

Potential health center sites were evaluated based on many different criteria, including:

- Large footprint to accommodate all services and to minimize building height
- Parking, existing or potential
- Proximity to public transportation and major transportation arteries
- Safe physical environment
- Visibility to the public
- Proximity to local amenities
- Longevity and Permanence

After evaluating dozens of options with a consultant, two sites were identified as the best potential locations for new health centers. One site is on the Friends Hospital Campus, and the other is at the Frankford Transportation Center.

The Friends Hospital site is located on the beautiful Friends Hospital Campus. Several locations on the campus itself were evaluated; the alternatives were not suitable for the health center due to their distance from transit and unideal geography (the sloped ground would make it difficult to navigate for individuals with wheelchairs or other mobility devices).

The proposed site will be about 55,000 square feet. This new center would be expected to serve 30,000 patients per year.

In addition to the traditionally offered services, this health center will also offer physical therapy and a teaching kitchen.

The health center will be surrounded by green space, which will be utilized by WeWalkPHL for community walking groups.

The chosen site on the campus would require the demolition of the Lawnside building, which is the former Superintendent's residence. This building has been vacant for decades. PDPH and other medical groups made efforts to rehabilitate the space, but the cost of meeting modern code requirements is prohibitive. As such, the Historical Commission has approved demolition of the Lawnside building and approved the final design of the health center. An appeal was filed with the Philadelphia Board and License and Inspection Review, who affirmed that decision of the Historical Commission. A subsequent appeal was filed by a community member with the Court of Common Pleas, which was quashed. Currently, the Commonwealth Court is reviewing the Court of Common Pleas decision to quash the appeal. It is hoped a decision on this matter will be made soon. PDPH hopes to work with the community to find uses for the stone from the original Lawnside building on the new health center property.

Funding

Funding for both projects has been secured and will not impact or increase current taxes. Once built, the health centers are self-sustaining, as they generate revenue from reimbursements and other sources.

D. Community Engagement Efforts

PDPH has held multiple public meetings to adequately inform the public about the proposal and receive comments and questions. Meetings were scheduled at various days and times, and in multiple neighborhoods in the Northeast to accommodate the greatest number of residents.

Meetings took place on the following dates:

- Saturday December 2, 2023, at 4pm at the Simpson Recreation Center
- Tuesday February 20, 2024, at 6pm at the Houseman Recreation Center, with 31 residents in attendance
- Wednesday February 21, 2024, at 6:30pm at the Juniata Boys & Girls Club, with 40 residents in attendance
- Tuesday February 27, 2024, at 6:30pm at the First Presbyterian Church of Olney, with 25 residents in attendance
- Thursday March 21, 2024, at 6:30pm at the St. Williams Social Hall, with 15 residents in attendance
- Tuesday April 2, 2024, at 6:30pm at the New Life Church, with 12 residents in attendance

The typical meeting format included a presentation from PDPH on the proposal, followed by a question and comment period. At meetings with a larger public presence, comment time was limited to three minutes per person. Meetings were attended by PDPH staff, including the Health Commissioner, Deputy Health Commissioner, and Chief of Staff. Also in attendance were Councilmembers Lozada, Phillips (on 2/20), Harrity (on 2/21), and former Councilmember Vaughn (on 2/27). To date, the project has letters of support from several elected officials including- Councilmember Lozada, Councilmember O'Neill, Councilmember Driscoll, State Representative Dawkins and State Representative Hohenstein.

Other opportunities for the community to learn about and provide feedback on the proposal were available. These opportunities included the Scattergood Foundation presentation of the application for the demolition of the Lawnside House and conceptual approval of the health center building to the Historical Commission in June 2023; both sessions allowed for public comment. Additionally, on November 1, 2023, PDPH attended a meeting hosted by Senator Tartaglione to present information both to elected officials, as well as community members. PDPH also presented information virtually via Zoom during the Philadelphia Unemployment Project's public meeting on 12/19 at 7pm and again during the Lower Northeast Neighborhood Partnership Meeting on 2/15 at 9am. Public commenting periods occurred during both meetings.

Comments were also received by email. An inbox was created, and the address (newcityhealthcenter@phila.gov) was shared via a one-pager in multiple languages, including Spanish, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, and Chinese. Via email, PDPH also received a petition in support of the project that had amassed 1,318 signatures from residents as of April 13th, 2024.

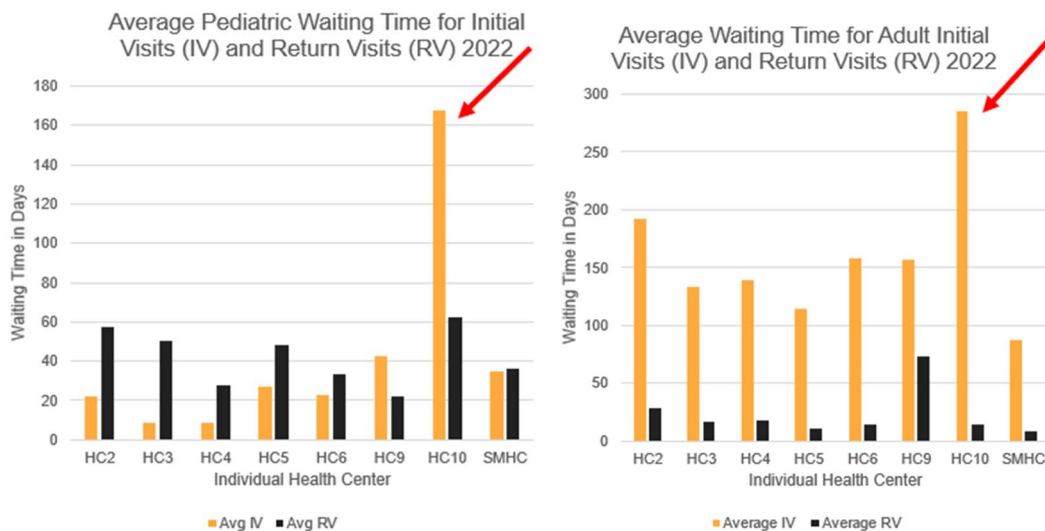
E. Response to Questions and Comments

Over the course of the community meeting series, PDPH received many comments and questions from residents. Below we have categorized and summarized the feedback received and provided a response to each. We thank everyone who participated in the engagement process.

Selection Process:

Question: Why do we need more health centers?

PDPH Response: The need for primary care services in the Northeast is well established. There is only one existing PDPH health center in the Northeast (HC10) and wait times for children and adults are unacceptable.



The nearest city health center for most Northeast residents is in West Philadelphia. Please refer to PDPH’s 2018 report on the subject on our website for more specific details on primary care needs: <https://www.phila.gov/documents/access-to-primary-care-in-philadelphia/>.

Question: How were the sites selected?

PDPH Response: Many locations were reviewed by PDPH and our consultants, with specific criteria in mind, including:

- Large footprint to accommodate all services and to minimize building height.
- Parking, existing or potential
- Proximity to public transportation and major transportation arteries
- Safe physical environment
- Visibility to the public
- Proximity to local amenities
- Longevity and Permanence

PDPH has spent many years evaluating community healthcare needs, finding potential sites, evaluating those sites, and selecting a site.

Question: What alternatives were evaluated?

PDPH Response: Over 40 locations were evaluated by PDPH and our consultants. The seven finalists are publicly available:

- 2361-2375 Welsh Road
- 2901 Grant Avenue
- Krewstown & Grant Site
- 20 Franklin Mills Blvd Site
- NE Tower Center: Triangle
- NE Tower Center: Power Plant
- Friends Hospital Site

The remaining sites were evaluated by the Department of Public Property real estate and PDPH leadership. All the sites considered are private property, either for sale or lease and release of this information is being withheld due to privacy and litigation concerns with the owners of these properties.

Question: Don't most residents already have primary care providers?

PDPH Response: The Northeast is experiencing significant population growth. People new to the neighborhood will need primary care. The health centers provide services to all Philadelphians and are especially important for un- and under-insured individuals, including children. If people in the neighborhood lose or change their jobs, they may not be able to go to their regular primary care doctor. These individuals can use the new health center. All of us may need to use a city health center at one time or another.

Question: Why is the Friends site reliant on parking? Won't traffic to the site contribute to an increase in air pollution in the area?

PDPH Response: We understand and share your concern for traffic-related pollutants and believe in finding alternate routes of travel, like walking, biking, or public transportation, whenever possible. However, it is our mission to make healthcare accessible to everyone, and to design the health center to accommodate our patients. In 2021, our consultant conducted a parking survey and determined that the health center would require 225 parking spaces to accommodate patient and staff needs based on the number reporting via survey that they would drive to the health center.

We will encourage the use of public transportation to the site, as it will be accessible using SEPTA buses. Several SEPTA bus routes currently serve Friends Hospital; by 2025 a new express bus route will go into operation with a new bus station located in front of the proposed health center at Roosevelt Boulevard and Langdon Street. However, we will plan to make the site accessible to those who drive, especially those with health conditions that hinder mobility.

Question: Will traffic to the Friends site create unsafe conditions for drivers and pedestrians on Roosevelt Boulevard?

PDPH Response: No. Roosevelt Boulevard is already designed to handle development that generates large amounts of traffic, such as health centers, large shopping centers, office buildings, and apartment complexes. Traffic safety has improved, and speeding has been reduced

since the introduction of speed cameras in 2020. Since their introduction, there have been 50% fewer crashes involving pedestrians and it is projected that 36 lives have been saved. Traffic safety will continue to improve with a corridor-wide safety project to be completed in 2029; additional improvements will be made at the Roosevelt Boulevard and Langdon Street intersection to make pedestrian crossings safer and more comfortable.

The City of Philadelphia, PennDOT and SEPTA are making improvements to create a safe, reliable, and accessible Roosevelt Boulevard through their Route for Change. Changes will include improved pedestrian signals, islands, and crosswalks, as well as sidewalk, and bike lane improvements. Additionally, traffic signals and lane changes will be adjusted, and Michigan left turns will be established. There will be a Michigan left turn at the intersection of Langdon Street and Roosevelt Boulevard. The report can be found here:

https://www.phila.gov/media/20240313111015/Roosevelt-Boulevard-Information-Sheet_Web.pdf

Question: Why build a new location rather than using existing empty buildings in the Rising Sun Business Corridor, where parking and utilities are already set up and nearby local businesses would benefit? Or, why can't all patients be sent to one location at the Frankford Transportation Center site?

PDPH Response: Many locations were reviewed by PDPH and our consultants, with specific criteria in mind. Those are discussed in Section C of this document and in previous responses. Nearby empty buildings in the corridor do not have sufficient parking, or may share parking spaces with other stores, as in the case with many shopping centers or strip malls. Also, the square footage of these spaces does not meet the needed square footage for the new health centers. The Friends site will require 55,000 square feet, but existing buildings on the corridor have less than 12,000 square feet. The footprint of the existing empty buildings is too small and does not allow for the needed renovations to accommodate all the services that will be provided at the new health center. Utility connections already exist at the two proposed sites, so PDPH does not need to use an existing structure. For the same reasons, the Frankford Transportation Center health center, which, as part of an infill development will be able to see 16,000 patients annually, will not be able handle the full demand for primary care in the Northeast.

While we understand the concern for the Rising Sun Business Corridor, our primary goal with the establishment of the new health center is finding an appropriate location that will meet the needs of patients in the community and be easily accessible to as many people as possible.

Question: Why not convert old pharmacies, like Oak Lane Health did with an old CVS building?

Oak Street Health is owned by CVS Healthspire and provides services only to Medicare patients. Currently Medicare insured patients make up 10% of the population served by the City Health Centers. Each location is set up to be no more than 15,000 square feet and servicing between 2,000-3,000 patients annually. The scope of services provided by Oak Street is limited to adult care, behavioral health, and lab. The size of the practice and smaller scale of services are incompatible with the needs of the new health center, and a true comparison cannot be made between the health centers and this organization.

Question: Why can't PDPH use the existing Lawnside building on the Friends Campus?

PDPH Response: PDPH understands community concern related to the demolition of the Lawnside building, a historical site on the Friends Hospital Campus. However, the building has been vacant for decades and is located on the only appropriate site on the Friends campus for the proposed health center. PDPH and other medical groups made efforts to rehabilitate the space, but the cost of meeting modern code requirements is prohibitive. As such, the Historical Commission has approved demolition of the Lawnside building and approved the final design of the health center. PDPH hopes to work with the community to find uses for the stone from the original Lawnside building on the new health center property. For more detail on this, please review the Historical Commission submission materials:

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20230620145604/4641-E-Roosevelt-Blvd-app.pdf>.

Question: Were other locations on the Friends campus assessed for the health center?

PDPH Response: In assessing the Friends Campus for an ideal site location, four sites on campus were surveyed in depth. See: [4641-E-Roosevelt-Blvd-app.pdf \(phila.gov\)](https://www.phila.gov/media/20230620145604/4641-E-Roosevelt-Blvd-app.pdf) (page 30).

Alternative 1: Determined to be infeasible.

1. Unsafe vehicular access from Roosevelt Blvd via secondary driveway.
2. No traffic signal. Right In / Right Out only driveway at Roosevelt Blvd.
3. Most vehicles would still use the Main entrance, meaning they must drive through the center of campus to get to the building, creating significant traffic in front of the main hospital building.
4. No feasible pedestrian or public transit access. SEPTA removed bus stops at secondary driveway because of unsafe traffic conditions.
5. Significantly longer walking distance to building entrance for patients from SEPTA stops at Roosevelt Blvd. and Langdon St.
6. Significant re-grading is required, site is currently depressed and retains storm water.
7. Conflicts with significant utilities.

Alternative 2: Determined to be infeasible.

1. Blocks viewshed of historic hospital building from Roosevelt Blvd.
2. Views of open lawn and trees from historic hospital building would be blocked by a new health center.
3. Significant landscape of lawn, trees, and pathways between Roosevelt Blvd and the parking area would be lost.
4. Potential new drop off road would be required to be located too close to Roosevelt Blvd, creating unsafe vehicular access, or would require all vehicles to drive through campus and enter via the central parking lot.
5. Longer walking distance for patients from SEPTA stop to building entrance.
6. Limits potential for expansion of existing crescent parking lot.

Alternative 3: Determined to be infeasible.

1. Entire site is a sloped bowl at the head of a stormwater drainage system that becomes a stream tributary to the Tacony Creek.

2. Difficult to access by vehicle. There is no existing drive to access site. Site is not visible from the main entrance or entry drive. The steep slope from the entry drive drops 12 feet.
3. No parking at the site. The current plan uses existing spaces to minimize additional parking spaces. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate parking without major negative impact on the landscape and adjacent buildings.
4. Difficult pedestrian access from the SEPTA stops.

Proposed Site and Configuration:

Optimal site because:

1. Only safe location for traffic flow, pedestrian access, pick up/drop off, and parking.
2. Most accessible location for pedestrians arriving by public transit, those with accessibility issues, and those dropping off with elderly or young patients.
3. Limits incursion of traffic into the campus.
4. Improves and adds to existing parking, using excess capacity
5. Maintains/restores the tree and landscape buffer along entry drive

Question: How does PDPH intend to honor the Friends Campus status as a National Historic Landmark?

PDPH Response: The health center building has been carefully and deliberately designed to not encroach on views of the front of the historical Friends Hospital from the Boulevard. Additionally, the building has been conceived as a background building seen between the trees, with a subtle brick pattern and window proportions which reflect those of the hospital building.

Question: Why are both health centers planned for the same district?

PDPH Response: The decision to place the new health centers in the seventh district is based on the need for primary care in the area and the availability of suitable sites. Many sites were evaluated; some were in other districts, but ultimately the most suitable sites were at the Friends Hospital Campus and the Frankford Transportation Center. Though the Frankford Transportation Center site is also located in the seventh district, our research demonstrates that both locations are necessary to address the demand for care in the Northeast Region. The Friends site will not be for exclusive use by seventh district residents; the site is readily accessible by car and by public transportation from adjacent districts.

Question: Why does PDPH plan for 80-year building use, when retail stores plan for 50 years or less?

PDPH Response: The longevity of the site is very important to us. Many retail stores, especially big box stores, are designed to have a very short lifespan, as they anticipate needing complete renovations in the event a new owner occupies the space. The health centers, in contrast, will be heavily utilized five to six days per week, and require durable materials and specific construction designs that consider the complex layout of the health center, the need for specialized materials for x-ray and electronic equipment (including computers) and the need for flexible or adaptable spaces that can be modified to accommodate future needs and any changes in service delivery.

Question: Won't advances in technology, like telemedicine, reduce the need for physical buildings?

PDPH Response: We are excited by advances in telemedicine and medical technology, but do not believe that these advances will make the need for a physical building obsolete. The populations using Philadelphia health centers may not have access to the internet, novel technology, or technological literacy required to be able to reap the benefits of such advances.

Question: Will these health centers negatively affect neighborhood safety?

PDPH Response: We are unaware of any evidence that providing primary care would reduce neighborhood safety or contribute to crime. In fact, existing research suggests that expanding access to healthcare can reduce the rate of certain crimes. People that use Philadelphia health centers are your friends, relatives, neighbors, and community members. They deserve to receive quality care, the same as anyone else. We are excited to serve all members of the Philadelphia community, of all backgrounds, at our health centers.

Services Offered:

Question: Will services be accessible to people that speak Spanish, or other languages besides English?

PDPH Response: The health centers are diligent in ensuring access to services for people speaking languages other than English. Health Centers serving populations that speak languages other than English have interpreters on staff, along with training on how to facilitate care with those patients. The health centers also have many bilingual employees. Our efforts are constantly evolving, as patients may speak up to 80 different languages. To fill gaps, we use telephonic interpretation services so that conversations between patients and providers can be interpreted in real time over the phone.

Question: Patients of a non-profit in the Northeast identified a new health center in the top five needs for their community, and identified dental and vision care, Spanish-language services, and access to vaccines as particular needs. Will these be offered?

PDPH Response: PDPH agrees that there is a need for more services in the area. Both new health centers will offer a full range of primary care services, including dental services. Vision care is currently not offered at city health centers; however, our support staff will work with patients to find resources for vision care and glasses. The health centers are diligent in ensuring access to services for people speaking languages other than English. Health Centers have interpreters on staff as well as bilingual staff to ensure non-English speakers have access to services. Interpreters may be present over the phone to translate in real-time if a physical interpreter is not available.

Question: Anti-immigrant sentiment is a barrier to healthcare access. How will anti-immigrant bias be addressed?

PDPH Response: Anti-immigrant sentiments have no place in city health centers or in our communities. The new health centers will offer services to all people regardless of country of origin, immigration status, race, gender, sex, disability status or income. For more on PDPH's nondiscrimination policy, please visit our website: <https://www.phila.gov/documents/title-v-compliance-policy-and-complaint-form/>.

Question: Will the new health centers provide drug and alcohol treatment?

PDPH Response: The health centers offer primary care, not specialized rehabilitation or drug and alcohol treatment. However, primary care services will be provided to anyone who needs it, including people with substance use disorders.

Question: What will be the hours of operation of the new health centers?

PDPH Response: The hours of operation will be a standard 8AM-5PM, or similar. Each health center also has expanded hours one evening or weekend day per week.

Question: Will mental health services be offered at the new health centers?

PDPH Response: The health centers have behavioral health consultants on site who see patients for a variety of mental health care needs. Their services are designed to be short term, episodic care, with patients needing more intensive care referred to more appropriate programs.

Question: Will the new health centers offer educational programming?

PDPH Response: The health centers do not typically offer formal health education programming. However, the health centers have social workers, dietitians and behavioral health consultants that provide education on specific topics. Clinical staff are also able to provide education on medical conditions, medication administration and compliance. Health center staff also can refer patients to external organizations for follow up.

Question: Will there be meeting spaces available in the new health center for community use?

PDPH Response: Yes!

Question: Will the health centers be used for housing or overnight stays at any point?

PDPH Response: No. The health centers are designed to be used only for outpatient medical services. They are not suitable for overnight, temporary, or long-term housing.

Question: Is the health center like an urgent care?

PDPH Response: No. The health center is not an urgent care practice. Patients that come to the health center are assigned to a provider who they see every time they come in. That provider monitors overall health, diagnosis and treats chronic conditions and coordinates care with specialty providers. Urgent care is typically reserved for urgent and episodic medical care.

Logistics

Question: How long will it take for the sites to be built and operational?

PDPH Response: Planning for the health centers is ongoing. The City and its partners at Scattergood have been meeting and planning on an ongoing basis. The project had to first go through the Historical Commission to obtain approval for the demolition of the Lawnside House. Additionally, the project requires rezoning, and Councilmember Lozada wants to ensure community input and involvement throughout that process. We are hoping for construction to begin in 2025, with completion sometime in 2026.

Question: If the proposed sites were changed, how long would the project be set back?

PDPH Response: The project would be delayed about five years if another site had to be chosen. However, given the diligent site research and selection process, we are confident that the two best sites have been selected.

Question: What would the consequences be for the project if one health center were delayed or cancelled entirely?

PDPH Response: The two health centers are independent projects. If one were delayed or cancelled, the other could go on. However, from our research we believe both centers will be necessary to accommodate demand for primary care in the area.

Question: When will the Frankford project begin construction?

PDPH Response: The Frankford project has an architect, who has started the planning process, but the Frankford Community Development Corporation is waiting to hear the status of pending tax credits to determine when construction will begin. We hope updates will be provided this fall.

Question: How long will zoning approval take for the Friends Hospital site?

PDPH Response: The zoning application for the Friends site is already written, and Council Member Lozada will decide next steps to introduction to City Council. There is no specific time frame at this time, but the time for zoning has been considered in the project schedule.

Question: How will PDPH staff the new health centers?

PDPH Response: The city is working on becoming a competitive employer. We are working with the City Human Resources Department to recruit and retain employees. We also work closely with local universities to recruit physicians to work in the health centers.

Question: Will the project be union built?

PDPH Response: Yes!

Question: Who is the architectural firm on the Friends Campus project?

PDPH Response: VSBA Architects & Planners is the architectural firm on the project. <https://www.vsba.com/> VSBA is a Philadelphia firm led by Principal Dan McCoubrey, FAIA who directs almost all VSBA's projects. Principal Seth Cohen manages many of VSBA's projects. VSBA also employs licenses architects and graphic designers.

Question: Are there Native American artifacts buried on the grounds where the proposed health center is located?

PDPH Response: To the best knowledge of PDPH and the owners of the property, there are no artifacts buried on this site. The site of the proposed health center has been previously developed and no artifacts were found.

Finances

Question: Will the project impact local property taxes or other taxes?

PDPH Response: No. The project has been financed without an increase in property or other taxes. Once the health centers open, they will be self-sustaining, generating revenue through insurance reimbursements.

Question: How much will the health centers cost to build?

PDPH Response: While funding for the projects has been secured and budgeted, the final costs are not available. Construction will go through a competitive bidding process, with selections for vendors being made based on the City's vendor standards.

Question: Will it be expensive to upgrade or construct water, sewer, gas, electrical, cable and telephone lines on the Friends grounds?

PDPH Response: The Friends site is already connected to all needed utilities. There would not be costs associated with establishing new connections.

Question: If the construction of the health centers is delayed, what will happen to the money that's been set aside for them?

PDPH Response: The city will use earmarked grant money to construct the health centers. It has been specifically set aside for this project and will not be used up on other things.