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### Contact:

Gigi Saladna  
Senior Communications Manager  
412.304.4042  
[gsaladna@ura.org](mailto:gsaladna@ura.org)

## URA Board Votes to Approve Moving Lower Hill Development Forward

*Historic vote sets the stage for an \$11M investment to fund housing and economic development in the Greater Hill District*

PITTSBURGH, PA (May 21, 2020) – The URA Board of Directors voted to approve Buccini/PollinGroup, Inc. as the developer, and the conceptual development plan for F.N.B. Corp.’s new headquarters on Block G1 of the Lower Hill site, at its Special Board Meeting held virtually today at 2 p.m. This long-awaited vote sets the stage for an \$11M investment to fund housing and economic development in the Greater Hill District.

The board conditioned their preliminary approvals on the development team continuing best efforts to reach an agreement on a Community Impact Plan, consistent with the CCIP and the draft provided by the development team in April 2020. URA Staff will provide guidance and a compliance assessment to assist the Board in assessing whether such efforts have been made in advance of future votes.

“At a time when our economy is in shambles, the URA understands the importance of being able to advance projects that provide jobs, especially for those in communities hardest-hit like the Hill District,” said Chairman Sam Williamson. “However, at the new URA we are focused on the quality of those jobs and ensuring that improving economic metrics doesn’t come at the expense of people and our communities. Unlike any other economic development agency in the country, we are laser-focused on improving the lives of those previously neglected by the system.”

“I have said from the beginning that we will either do this development right, or not at all,” said Councilman R. Daniel Lavelle. “While far from perfect, these preliminary approvals allow us to move forward on the site, while remaining focused on providing benefits above Crawford Street. The cost of inaction is too great— we need funding to advance critical work like the [Centre Ave RFQ](#), a Hill District Housing Reinvestment Account, and revitalizing the entire Middle and Upper Hill District.”

Today’s vote:

- Provides initial approval for the Buccini/PollinGroup, Inc. to purchase a part of the Lower Hill site
- Provides initial approval for the conceptual plan for the site, which includes a 26-story, mixed-use tower with 382,000 square feet of office space, 35,000 square feet of ground floor retail and 112 spaces of structured parking. The tower will house First National Bank's headquarters.

- Will seed \$8M to the Greater Hill Reinvestment Fund. This fund will support various community benefits in the Hill.
- Will activate funding for the community, including support for the 6 transformative Centre Avenue developments, led by local MBE firms and Hill District businesses.
- Allows a \$3M investment in Hill District Housing Reinvestment Account, which can be used for repairs to owner-occupied and tenant-occupied affordable housing units, legal assistance regarding Tangled Title resolution and Will creation, and other small neighborhood infrastructure projects.
- Secures commitments to local hiring and job standards that will ensure Hill District residents access to hundreds of good-paying jobs and career paths both during and after construction.

“This isn’t just a redevelopment project. It’s really about how we rebuild the Lower Hill,” said Board Vice Chair Representative Ed Gainey. “We have an opportunity now to change this whole narrative. We have an opportunity to put African Americans back to work, help to build affordable housing, help to stabilize the Middle and Higher Hill, if we can do that - no not if, when - we do that. That should be the narrative.”

“What we are attempting to do here should be the standard for development, if completed successfully,” said Board Member Lindsay Powell. “Through an economic development project, we are trying to holistically improve and uplift a community that has seen generational disinvestment. We are trying to provide family sustaining jobs, affordable housing, and incorporate cultural legacy throughout the physical landscape — something we hope to see flow into the entire Greater Hill District.”

The Board also approved:

- Amendments to extending closing deadlines. Previously, the URA agreed to assist Buccini/PollinGroup, Inc. with applying for public financing. The developer sought a parking tax diversion, so that parking taxes generated on the site could potentially be diverted from the City to the developer to construct parking. The assistance agreement originally expired on May 10, 2020; the URA voted to extend the expiration date to December 10, 2020.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Partner4Work to leverage URA support for the First Source Hiring Center and workforce/small business-related support in the Lower Hill. The creation of the Hiring Center, located within the Hill District, will provide residents with access to:
  - Well-paying union construction jobs on the Lower Hill site
  - Sustainable non-construction jobs in high growth fields after construction
  - Small Business support
  - BankWork\$, Fund My Future and BizFit Programs

“Partner4Work looks forward to working with URA and the Lower Hill development team to bring much needed job opportunities to the Hill District neighborhood,” said Partner4Work CEO Earl Buford.

Presentations and briefings were also made on the:

- [Explanation of Neighborhood Benefits](#) related to Block G1 preliminary approvals
- [Greater Hill District Neighborhood Reinvestment Fund Guidelines](#), including a summary document of the update process
- [Lower Hill LERTA Retained Amount Guidelines](#)

The entire Special Board Meeting Presentation can be found [here](#). Lower Hill project updates and resources are posted [here](#).

***About the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA)***

*The [URA](#) is the City of Pittsburgh's economic development agency, supporting the City's economic development goals, which are designed to create a city of inclusive opportunity for residents, stakeholders, and communities. The URA is committed to creating more housing that is affordable to the average Pittsburgher; encouraging more entrepreneurship and small business development; promoting inclusive growth and quality job creation; expanding neighborhood and main streets revitalization efforts; and developing a talented workforce that is equipped with the skills of the future.*

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