

Northwest Gateway/Armstrong Project: Frequently Asked Questions

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For the last several years, EDC Finance Corporation, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster General Hospital, and Armstrong World Industries have been working cooperatively on the redevelopment of the former Armstrong World Industries site. With the yearlong demolition now complete, and environmental clean up well underway, the next phase of the project is set to begin. The project partners appreciate the support and patience of those who live and work in the neighborhood next to the site, and we have prepared answers to some common questions about the project and what lies ahead.

Who is redeveloping the site?

The redevelopment is a joint project of EDC Finance Corporation, Franklin & Marshall College, and Lancaster General Hospital. EDC Finance is part of the Lancaster County's Economic Development Company, a non-profit association that brings together resources to support economic development benefiting Lancaster County. Armstrong World Industries has also supported the redevelopment of the site. The College and the Hospital will use the land for expansion of their respective institutions.

What are the plans for the site?

The site covers about 47 acres, and straddles the border between Manheim Township and the City of Lancaster. Approximately two-thirds of the site will be acquired by Franklin & Marshall College and used for new athletic fields and facilities. The remaining third will be acquired by Lancaster General Hospital. While the Hospital has not made final decisions about redevelopment, it is looking at the site as a location for expanding the Hospital's College of Nursing and Health Sciences. In addition to new construction, the redeveloped site will offer new recreational and open space.

What are the benefits of redevelopment?

Without the redevelopment project, the old Armstrong facilities could have remained vacant, creating an eyesore for the community with no economic benefit for those who live and work in the area. Redevelopment will create beautiful new open space for athletic activities and events, along with new jobs that will benefit the entire community.

What is the environmental status of the site?

The site is cleaner and safer today than it was when the project began. Before demolition began, the site was evaluated for the presence of asbestos and lead based paint, and these materials were properly contained and removed from the site. Soil and groundwater testing is now being performed at the site under the guidance of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the US Environmental Protection Agency. Based upon the results of these tests, a remediation plan will be implemented. The site is being cleaned to a "residential" status, the DEP's most stringent standard.

What are Franklin & Marshall's plans?

The College intends to redevelop its portion of the site with an array of athletic fields and facilities, including space for baseball, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, football, track, and walking trails. The College also has a longer-term vision to construct a gymnasium and football stadium on the site. As is the case with the College's current athletic facilities, the new playing fields and walking paths will be available for public use when not being used by the College.

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What are Lancaster General Hospital's plans?

The Hospital is acquiring its portion of the site because the space represents a valuable asset for the Hospital's future. Decisions about how best to use the land in a way that will benefit both the Hospital and the community's healthcare will be made after careful thought and planning by the Hospital's Board of Trustees. LGH is exploring the idea of expanding and relocating its College of Nursing and Health Sciences to the site; however, no final decisions have been made.

What are the next steps for the site?

The next steps in the redevelopment process involve getting final land development approvals from Manheim Township and the City of Lancaster. During land development approval, these municipalities will review where infrastructure (roads, storm water management, utilities, lighting, etc.) will be placed. Once land development approvals are received, construction on that infrastructure will begin, as will work on the Franklin & Marshall portion of the site.

Will either F&M or LGH acquire additional properties in the area?

The College has no need to acquire any additional properties to create the new fields and athletic facilities it envisions for the site. It has, however, announced its desire to acquire the property now owned by Norfolk-Southern with rail lines leading to the Dillerville Rail Yard. Discussions and active planning are underway with Norfolk-Southern to relocate the Rail Yard.

The Hospital has taken steps to acquire a limited number of properties that, if included within the redevelopment area, could simplify planning and create a greater buffer between the existing neighborhood and the Hospital's development. Owners of these properties have already been contacted. The Hospital does not envision acquiring any other properties related to the Northwest Gateway/Armstrong project at this time.

Will there be additional impacts on the neighborhood?

We know the activity related to demolition of the site has impacted the neighborhood. Future construction will also impact the neighborhood, but it is our intention to work closely with neighbors to keep them informed and to minimize disruption. Installation of utilities such as water, gas, and electric, for example, could require temporary street closings or the replacement of some sidewalks. While we do not yet have any specific timeframes for this work, we will give neighbors advance notice. Neighbors with specific questions about the timing and nature of the construction work should contact Lisa Riggs, president of the James Street Improvement District at 717-394-0783 or via email at lisariggs@comcast.net.

What is the timeline for development?

We expect to receive land development approvals from Manheim Township and the City sometime in early 2008. Once approved, construction on the site—focusing on laying out streets and sidewalks, installing utilities such as electric, gas, water, and lighting, and other improvements—should begin shortly thereafter and be completed by the end of 2008. When that work is completed, Franklin & Marshall College and the Lancaster General Hospital will take ownership of their respective portions of the site from EDC Finance Corporation.

EDC Finance, Franklin & Marshall College, and Lancaster General Hospital deeply appreciate the support and patience of residents and businesses in the neighborhood next to the site. We hope you agree that the proposed development will enhance the beauty and value of the neighborhood and the broader Lancaster community.

Our desire is to maintain open communication with neighbors and businesses throughout this project. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lisa Riggs, president of the James Street Improvement District at 717-394-0783 or via email at lisariggs@comcast.net.