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Children's Home to Expand

By Paula Martinac
The Bulletin



ABOVE: Artist's rendering showing the vertical expansion of the west wing of Children's Home of Pittsburgh. Photo courtesy VEBH Architects

Bloomfield – The Children's Home of Pittsburgh & Lemieux Family Center has been at 5324 Penn Ave. since 2007, and the organization is experiencing some growing pains. In particular, the need for its in-patient pediatric specialty hospital is on the rise, reported Pam Schanwald, the organization's CEO, at a community meeting held on Oct. 15.

A 10-year Master Plan filed with the City of Pittsburgh in 2004 gave CHP an "envelope to expand," and Schanwald explained that the plan allows CHP to build two more floors on top of the west wing of the existing building. The new floors will add 11,000 square feet to the property, and include 14 private patient rooms with bathrooms.

"It's not going to change what the building looks like," she said.

Because the two additional floors were shown in the original Master Plan, Schanwald said CHP does not need further approval from the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment. As a result, there will be no public hearing before the board.

Schanwald said she expects a groundbreaking no sooner than January 2014,

with construction taking 14 to 16 months. According to Josh Amrhein, CHP operations manager, there will be no disruption of client services during construction. "Current services will be completely operational," he told *The Bulletin*.

At the community meeting, Schanwald and Amrhein stressed that CHP has worked closely with contractor P.J. Dick to ensure that the construction project remains sensitive to the neighboring community. Although 10 staff parking spaces will be lost during the construction, staff has been arranging alternate parking with nearby businesses so as not to take parking spots from nearby neighbors. In addition, trucks will come onto the site from Penn Avenue, and not through the residential area.

Schanwald also pointed out that the problem with noise that neighbors experienced with the HVAC units on the original building will not reoccur. In the new design – done by VEBH Architects – a single HVAC unit will be in the attic space; with the condenser inside, the neighborhood will be shielded from noise, said Schanwald. ♦