

# OSU facility back on track

**NEWS, TOP STORIES**

[Powell officials to vote on updated plans](#)

By Dillon Davis - [cdavis@aimmediamidwest.com](mailto:cdavis@aimmediamidwest.com)



An aerial view from the northwest of the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center facility proposed for construction on Sawmill Parkway in Powell.

Courtesy image | City of Powell

Plans for construction of the highly-anticipated Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center facility in Powell are back on track as Powell City Council listened to an ordinance for an amended final development plan during Tuesday's meeting.

The facility, which is to be located on approximately 30 acres at 7071 Sawmill Parkway across from Olentangy Liberty High School, is set to include an ambulatory care center and medical office building as part of phase one of the site. A final development plan for the first phase was approved by council in February 2019, but work was delayed in large part due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time, OSU also had projects currently under construction for Wexner facilities in New Albany and Dublin, both of which are now operational, leaving the Powell project as OSU's primary focus.

In January 2021, council approved an extension for the developers to delay the start of work on the site. Under the approved final development plan, site construction was required to begin within two years of the plan's approval, with full construction being completed within a five-year period.

With the extension, the deadline for site work to begin was extended to May 31, 2023, and the deadline for completion of phase one was extended to May 31, 2025. During Tuesday's meeting, City Manager Andrew White said the city was notified early last year of OSU's intentions of moving forward with the project, which he called "a long time coming" for some of the members of council who have been a part of the project's progression.

The proposed amendment to the previously approved final development plan shows an expanded building that will now encompass 200,000 square feet rather than the 150,000-square-foot facility originally approved. The location of the building has also been moved to be more centered on the site.

"What the relocation of the building has accomplished, really, is to move the parking into more pods around the building," Powell Planning Director Claudia Husak said. "It also has moved some of the more intense uses in terms of ambulance drop-off and so forth away from the residences to the north."

Husak noted the developers have had meetings with the neighboring residents as part of the revision process, and the Kinsale Village Homeowners Association has "welcomed the changes."

The amendment also includes landscaping details and plans for the signage around the facility, elements that were not included in the final development plan. Council approved the original plan without the details as a show of good faith, understanding OSU's well-established reputation was worth the investment.

White said the modifications to the final development plan will ultimately result in an expanded project in terms of square footage, as well as an expanded payroll, which he said are "both great things for the city."

"Five years in the making, we're finally here," Aaron Underhill, the attorney representing OSU, told council. "I think when we came through originally back in 2018-19, we were pretty forthright in that we didn't think this project would get off the ground right away. I think COVID and some other things got in the way ... but we, as a university, and from some of these other facilities we've built that happened to get out of the gate before this one, really allow this one to be the best of the three buildings, we believe, because we have had some lessons learned. So maybe the delay, in the end, is a good thing."

Underhill added, "I think there are a lot of positives. This is a bigger project out of the gate with phase one, and the jobs and the payroll are better. A lot of good things come to those who wait."

Members of council were given a tour of the recently-constructed OSU Wexner facility in Dublin to gain an idea of what to expect from the Powell location, which will feature a largely similar layout.

Vice Mayor Tom Counts said of the project, "Just seeing what we saw (at the Dublin site), I can say that all of us believe we can show our residents and have great confidence that this is going to be a fantastic project for this community. A community like Powell needs to have services available in the community, and this, to me, is just a huge first step in that regard."

Mayor Daniel Swartwout closed the comments by stating, "I think it's fantastic that we're here at this space and, to echo some of the things that Mr. Underhill said, that we get the benefit from everything that Ohio State and Wexner learned through the first two passes of that. That comes to benefit our community. That, to me, is a very exciting development, even if it's taken a few years to get here."

"And going beyond the economic development opportunities, which this obviously represents as the biggest economic development project in the history of the city by far, I do not want to overlook the importance of having world-class healthcare and world-class medical facilities right in our backyard. I think that is such a key component to what this project is all about."

Tuesday's meeting was the first reading of the proposed amendment to the previously approved final development plan and development text deviations. A second reading will be held at the next council meeting, which is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 17, and will include a public hearing.

Should the amended final development plan be approved at the meeting as expected, construction is expected to begin on schedule this spring, with the facility operational in the spring of 2025.