# Transcript for the City of Ohio State Podcast Season 4 Episode 3: FDC with Kristin Poldemann and Garth Dahdah

The City of Ohio State podcast takes a deep dive into the support services that keep OSU's Columbus campus running 24/7. Hear from industry experts in facilities, construction, real estate, public safety, transportation and more. The City of Ohio State podcast is brought to you by the Office of Administration and Planning. Go bucks. Hello and welcome to the City of Ohio State podcast. I'm your host Dan Hedman.

This month we welcome back Kristin Poldemann, a frequent flyer of the program and the Associate Vice President for Facilities Design and Construction. This time, though, she's joined by the Wexner Medical Center's Garth Dahdah, the Senior Director of Capital Projects and Space Planning for Ambulatory Services and the Wexner Medical Center. Kristin and Garth, thanks for being here today. Thanks for having us. Thank you. Yep. One reason we wanted to have Garth join us today is to take a look at the important partnerships that FDC has to have to do its work. Before we dive into that though, Kristin, maybe you can give us a quick list of finished or active projects where you and Garth's medical center team have worked closely together to advance construction. Yeah, I'd love to, um, so just to kind of put this in context, um, FDC facilities design and construction, um, we do about 1500, 1600 projects. Um, at, at any given time, um, is sort of what comes through our office and our medical center project team handles about 660 medical center projects. Uh, 170 health sciences projects. That's usually how we break it up. So just to kind of give you a context of volume. But I wanted to highlight a couple that are are notable. So Martha Morehouse facility improvements. That's been a complete transformation of that building. So if If you haven't gone in that building, I encourage you to walk in and see if you remember it from what it was before. Beautiful transformation. That started in 2019. And it ended, uh, late 2024. And, um, you can see also even from the exterior going from the orange, uh, detailing to the gray. Um, but really that touched, uh, every part of Martha Morehouse and it was a great project. Uh, our med center loading dock expansion renovation, uh, project, that's something that is, um, currently, so that project is currently active. It'll be complete this spring. Um, very important for, uh, that project, uh, not only for the med center, uh, current buildings, but also for the new tower. And then I wanted to mention the OSU East projects. There's a couple that are pretty notable, um, that I wanted to highlight. So OSU East dock expansion is one that, um, Really, uh, improved, uh, their dock flow and that just finished up. Uh, and then we just started the OSU East OR renovations project and that's going to be a multi-phase, very complex project. So we're really proud of those. And then I can't, um, not mention the largest project, the hospital tower. Of course, we're excited about construction, uh, being completed later this year and then, uh, it'll open first part of next year. Yeah, that's great. I know we've talked about inpatient hospital and some of these other major projects a lot, and it's not like these other projects you just mentioned are small by any means. They're, they'd be considered really large projects in other places, but I'm glad you're able to touch on those and give us a little bit of the full breadth of Of the type of work that your team is doing. So, Garth, I guess this one's for you. We've heard from Kristen before providing updates on where some of these major projects stand. I know Outpatient Care Powell is the third in a series of suburban centers following New Albany and Dublin. Can you talk through what your team and FDC has learned through building those first two outpatient care sites and if there was a process that led to reimagining the Powell site as a result? Absolutely, you know, um, the third time's a charm. We learned a great deal from our outpatient care in New Albany and we put those lessons learned into Dublin. And even though we had some late changes, we were able to bring forth all of those lessons learned from New Albany into Dublin. Um, and then we learned even more and we brought those, those lessons learned in, into Powell. You know, we are, we're really meticulous about making sure that the patients have a good experience and the staff and faculty have a Great working experience for their clinic so they can care for the patients. So we really spent a lot of time with the end users to create an atmosphere and a flow for them that makes a lot of sense. You know, for Powell, you know, we actually expanded the way we do our arrival. So we used our lesson learned from Outpatient care at Dublin, where we come off the University Boulevard, traverse in, you can either park, uh, you could valet your car or drop somebody off. And it's set back off of University Boulevard. Our previous design in Powell, we had it right on Sawmill Parkway. And we decided to use what we did in Dublin in Powell and in the Powell City really enjoyed seeing that change so we can have that same arrival experience. And not only that, we added more ADA parking closer to the building. We also try to limit the distance walking from patient parking to the entry of the building. And one of the big major change is that we have staff and faculty parking another section of the building and entering in from another section, so they are not commingling with. With the patients. So offering more space for the patients, uh, with that closer distance. And, you know, we, we really try to, um, take a look at the services that are used the most. Uh, we have advanced urgent care. And a retail pharmacy at all our locations. And we decided to put that in really close to the front door because those are the most frequently used services. Um, and then we moved neurology and cardiology down to the second floor because that team said the patient's Had some anxiety going all the way to the fifth floor in our former sites. So, um, we really kind of focus on really the patient listening to our end users. Um, we worked with the city of Powell and, uh, put in about a, A mile and a quarter of walking paths, and those walking paths connect to the community nearby, the community paths, and so that was welcomed for sure. And then it's not just bricks and mortar and, and nails and hammers, right? I mean, there's a lot of planning that goes into not just what the patient's going to experience, but then how that impacts construction. So I just wanted to jump in here and see Kristen, if there's anything. You wanted to add on how programming changes or lessons learned can make your team's work more efficient and effective when you're working so closely with Garth. Absolutely, so we spend a lot of time with Garth and his team. Uh, just like Garth mentioned, we take that feedback from the patients and the experience And that really has, um, gone in to, uh, inform how we make those changes, either ADA parking or, um, where the parking's located on site or how do we position Departments within the building so that's really important and we've been very intentional from one building to the other Uh, taking that in from a design standpoint, um, and also from a construction standpoint, uh, the lessons learned, uh, and the ideas to improve efficiency. Um, is really important. So, um, to highlight a couple for you, Dan, um, just from a construction standpoint, um, we, uh, have done a lot of prefabrication more than the other sites, um, on Powell. So we've taken what we learned in New Albany, we've taken those lessons to Dublin, and now the, the level of prefabrication on the interior and exterior for, um, For example, like exterior framing that was all done sort of on the ground or in a warehouse and they lifted in place and now. Um, that structure's in place and if you go out to Outpatient Care Pal, you'll start to see like the curtain wall is going up on that framing. And we don't open this building for another year. So that's incredible. Um, we've been working with our team to pre-purchase, uh, long Lead time items, so gear, steel, things like that, which just helps us move quicker. Again, lessons learned, improving efficiency. Um, and then I was going to just mention, um, you know, flexibility is really important for the med center. So just like Garth said, if, if feedback comes in and we have to make a change. Um, in outpatient care pal, we're using interior wall assemblies, uh, that are all pre-engineered. So they're all sort of, um, demountable type wall systems. Where if the med center does get feedback or they want to make a change with a department, we can do that a lot easier than if it were metal studs and drywall and you're ripping things out. Um, and so just bringing that flexibility and, and trying to be mindful of, um, you know, how the med center needs to continue to, um, improve is really top of mind. So for both of you now, we'll start with Garth and then let Kristin add on. Where are we in the progress about patient care, pal? I think Kristen said we're about a year away, but what's next in the timeline and how's it going overall from your perspective, Garth? From a design and operational standpoint, we're making excellent progress. We have a significant milestone. We're integrating the James Oncology program in Powell. Um, and that's going to significantly expand our cancer care across the community, a much needed service line. Um, our staffing plan and recruitment plans are, are underway. Um, It takes a long time to recruit faculty, so we really have to start that process now, and we have to make sure that we have enough staff to open up the building. That means we need a Advertise for them and then get it to the point where we can start to hire and train them. So we we are working pretty much on time. And, um, I got to say the city of Powell has been a great partner and, uh, they are welcoming us with open arms. So, Dan, I was just gonna add on that, um, from a construction standpoint, uh, you'll see that, uh, site work is actually gonna be completed this year, which Um, it opens up, uh, next year, um, August, it'll open up, um, but, um, this is kind of rare for us. Um, they're really using the opportunities, um, early on to, um, Uh, get the site situated, get trees planted, get the parking lot in, get the light poles in. Things like that may seem small. But getting that stuff done a year in advance, um, and making sure all the bugs are worked out, uh, making sure trees live, uh, rather than putting them in at the last minute and then a tree dies, you know, and we're replacing it. So, um, this, this is really, um, fantastic for the team and great to see. Of course, I mentioned like curtain wall going up on the southwest corner, but if you go by there, precast is completed, windows are going in. You have brick going up. Um, it really has been a fantastic crew. And again, can't say enough about, um, the city of Powell and the partnership with the med center team. Really to take everything from uh, years past and projects um, from the past and rolling it into this project. And I know these major projects are really just the tip of the iceberg for your collaboration. In reality, it's those smaller projects that truly make up the majority of your work. So, Kristen, can you give me an example of how your teams are working together to make things happen, maybe even highlighting a recent initiative? Yeah, I'd love to. Um, so, uh, this, uh, there's a project that was, um, definitely on my mind, a glove box project. So this is replacing, um, the, uh, the glove boxes within patient rooms. Um, so this project needed, uh, a quick turnaround. So there were nearly 700 patient rooms that required Daily meetings between our FDC, uh, design and construction PM and Garth's team. Uh, the work was completed in forty-five days, which is amazing. Um, so these are all. Patient rooms that are used, uh, actively scheduled. And, um, we all had to, uh, meet on a daily basis, figure out how we're going to tackle this. The team did a great job, and just to highlight and sort of gratitude for the team, uh, Aaron Poland was our project manager on that glove box project for design and construction. Um, she's a, she's our senior project manager in charge of that. Julie Dolan, uh, who is on Garth's team, she did the interiors and worked closely with Aaron. And then Jay Allen, who, um, was from supply chain. Those three together did a fantastic job. So this is representative of, um, Really all of the projects where the team has to strategize, think through a plan, uh, and then attack the plan and execute. And, and this is a great example of that. Yeah, it really does sound like a good example. Garth, as an extension of this, I believe you oversee the medical center's interior design planners, but FDC obviously partners with you on all medical equipment planning, furniture, fixture changes, things like that. What efforts have been made in recent years to improve this process and how are you doing it better than before? We uh, we improve the processes by bringing the teams together. Really, the FDT team and along with the interior design planners But senior planners and signage and wayfinding along with our equipment planners all work together as a cohesive team. And that's really important. Um, we, we try to do this early on. Uh, so we can balance, you know, standardization and flexibility to ensure like our spaces are really designed and outfitted, um, in a timely manner and really within a, within a budget. We really try to foster this early collaboration and to leverage everyone's expertise to get them at the table sooner than later so we can cross off all those things that need to be crossed off in order to make a project. Very cohesive and, uh, to, and to prevent anything that may happen, uh, negatively. So we've had a great working experience with the FDC team. Yeah, I think it's, uh, really important, uh, especially at a university setting like this. I mean, the medical center in reality is, is such a big and major entity, right? But to have the collaboration that you obviously have with Kristin's team, I mean. I can already see through this conversation the dividends it's paying. It's been a really interesting conversation. As we wrap up though, I'll just ask both of you and maybe we'll let Kristen go first this time. Is there anything we haven't talked about you really want to make sure to highlight related to the work that facilities design and construction does for the Wexner Medical Center or in partnership with the Wexner Medical Center? Sure. Um, well, I, I tell my team, uh, in design and construction, um, I tell them this a lot that it, it takes each of us brings a different expertise. Uh, and a different viewpoint, um, and expertise to the table. We're, we're like a big complex puzzle. And, but when we fit together, um, that's how we can be successful. And, and so that's exactly how I describe, you know, how we work with Garth's team. So, you know, we rely on them for, like Garth said, medical equipment planning, environmental branding, signage. All of that is critical, um, for all of the work we do. And, um, if we just recognize that we are this big complex puzzle, but we can't be successful individually, we got to do it together. That's the key. And so with that comes communication, partnership, a respect for each other, professionalism. So it's essential that we come together and we continue to work to. You know, provide this service seamlessly. So we appreciate the partnership. Um, I, I always love working with Garth and his team and, and we have a lot of fun doing it. What about you, Garth? Anything we haven't discussed in relation to how you work with FTC that you just think our listeners should know? Well, building on Kristin's points, and I really enjoy working with her and her team and have done so for quite a few years now. We are true partners with the FTC team and being true partners means that sometimes we have to bring forth, you know, those difficult questions to difficult Lessons learned and bring it forth and learn from them. So we have various meetings throughout the week, not just to have meetings, but to really help. Solve and prevent, uh, problems and issues to move projects along and their team is then most willing to be cooperative, uh, in those meetings. It's been, it's been really, um, a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement. And it's been a great situation, uh, that Kristen with her leadership and, and she, it flows down to her team because you can tell because the team is. Very responsive, very willing, and very caring in each and every one of those projects, even the smallest of projects. They make sure that they work with our teams wholeheartedly, and it's been a great experience, and I really enjoy working with their teams. And all of the teams at the Wexner Medical Center. That's great. Well, I appreciate it. I can see the partnership through this podcast and how well you work together, but I appreciate you both taking the time to talk with me today. Thank you. The City of Ohio State podcast is brought to you by the Office of Administration and Planning. Until next time, be kind and go Bucks!