



Water Tower Landmark Trust

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Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Bentoff, and I am the co-chair of the Buildings and Institutions Committee of the Water Tower Landmark Trust, a neighborhood group that has represented Milwaukee residents for more than 30 years. Unfortunately, my co-chair Randy Bryant was unable to join me here today.

I am here to express our committee's support for Columbia St. Mary's General Plan Development proposal for its Lake Drive Campus. The committee that I represent is made up of 10 other neighbors, and we have met with CSM representatives almost monthly for the last two and half years. It has been a long process, and I would like to commend and thank CSM for creating an open dialogue and including the neighborhood from almost the very beginning. I believe that CSM developed a better product because it listened to the residents' concerns. Additionally, I would like to thank the other members of our committee who volunteered their time in working on this issue, often for several hours a month over the last few years.

We have seen many earlier iterations of the current plan, which has changed as Columbia St. Mary's refined its needs, determined what resources it had available and received neighborhood input. We are confident that the General Plan Development proposal before you incorporates the neighborhood's viewpoint and priorities.

Our focus all along has been to protect the historic and residential character of our neighborhood, which includes the largest collection of historic homes in Wisconsin. To minimize the overwhelming impact of a development of this size, we specifically asked that the size and scale of any structure close to the historic residential district be sensitive and compatible to the surrounding homes and Water Tower Park. We also asked that, to help maintain the residential character of the area, hospital development east of Lake Drive focus on the least-intensive types of medical uses and vehicular and pedestrian activities. In order to accomplish this we asked for:

1. No vehicle or pedestrian access from Terrace Ave. Currently, there is no access from Terrace Ave., and this protection helps control movement from the hospital into the neighborhood.

2. Restoration of residential uses along the west side of Terrace Ave. We feel that building new homes on the west side of Terrace will create the ideal buffer between the neighborhood and the hospital.
3. No major future hospital expansion east of Lake Drive. We feel this is an important protection for the future and quite honestly, we don't want to have to go through this process again in the next 5 to 10 years.
4. No skywalks over city streets, especially over Lake Drive, and no closing of city streets. We were unequivocal in opposing a skywalk over Lake Drive.

CSM ultimately agreed with us on these positions, and you will find that these neighborhood priorities are included in the plan. Additionally, we are also pleased with many other aspects of the General Plan, including the location of emergency vehicle entrances and the heliport, and the hospital's intent to seek a narrowing of Lake Drive. CSM has compromised on many issues to accommodate our concerns, and similarly, our committee compromised on many positions as we better understood CSM's needs.

Despite significant progress so far, our work is still not done. We are currently working with CSM on a binding written agreement between the hospital and Water Tower that formally codifies the elements of the General Plan. We also are continuing to work with the hospital to finalize agreement on important details of the project, such as signage, lighting, and landscaping. These critical details can have a very profound impact on the neighborhood. We expect to reach agreement on these details in the next few months, before the Detail Plan Development is submitted to you, and before we comment on the Detail Plan Development.

Thank you for your time today, and I urge you on behalf of the Water Tower Landmark Trust to support this General Plan Development.