

November 1, 2005

To the Honorable Common Council  
Zoning, Neighborhoods and  
Development Committee  
City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Members:

Attached is File No. 031745, being an ordinance relating to the change in zoning from a General Planned Development (GPD) to a Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as Columbia St. Mary's, Phase 1, on land located on the North Side of East North Avenue between North Lake Drive and North Terrace Avenue, in the 3rd Aldermanic District.

This ordinance will permit the construction of the Water Tower Medical Commons Office Building (WTMC), medical offices, and site modifications. The WTMC will replace the 1958 Hill and Northpoint buildings between Lake Drive and Terrace Avenue.

Water Tower Medical Commons is a 135,000 – 165,000 GSF building with a five-story medical office building sitting atop a cancer center platform for a total of six stories. There will be a large drop off area off of Lake Drive with public entrances into each building and canopies above the entrance to the Cancer Center. The podium or first floor is set back from the offices above with a combination of vision and spandrel glass. Brick and precast concrete are on the north, east and south facades and respond to the East Facility materials. The brick will compliment the color of the East Facility. The materials and fenestration are similar to the Core Hospital.

Upon approval from the Historic Preservation Commission, CSM will relocate an existing medical gas facility currently located near it's central utility plant on the west side of Lake Drive. The medical gas storage tanks will be moved to the east side of Lake Drive, immediately north of the existing East Facility for a period of approximately four years. It is proposed that truck deliveries of these gasses use a remote fill device located near a new truck lay-by on the east side of Lake Drive. Once the Main Hospital is constructed, these gas tanks and related appurtenances will be relocated to a permanent location west of Lake Drive and the WTMC courtyard.

CSM would also like to narrow the Lake Drive roadway width approximately 14 feet between North Avenue and Downer Avenue upon completion of the project. Recent meetings with DPW have confirmed that this could occur after the Main Hospital is complete.

The building will primarily be served by an existing below grade service tunnel, however small package deliveries and vans will be able to provide many of the required service functions, either at the front door or from the parking garage access points.

A five story parking structure (to be submitted as an amendment to the DPD at a future date) will provide between 650 and 750 parking spaces. Vehicular access will only occur from Lake Drive and the WTMC drop off area. A connection to the medical office building adjacent to the elevator core will physically connect all medical office building (MOB) floors to the parking structure.

The main podium will have a perforated metal screen canopy over the entrance with the Cancer Center identity. A building identity (freestanding letters) is located on the secondary entrance canopy.

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If Lake Drive is narrowed, the streetscape along the east side of Lake Drive will be improved. Rather than repeat the existing condition of random street trees and lawn strips, the streetscape will be planted with a richer palette of plants in order to distinguish the site from the residential neighborhood to the north. Since the site is being extensively regraded, most of the existing street trees will require replacement within the construction limit lines.

Three distinct areas of open space are being created upon completion of the WTMC: an arrival courtyard, a healing garden, and a passive sitting garden. The arrival court will include scored and patterned concrete with bosques of trees and underplantings used along Lake Drive. The island will be planted with bushes and mostly sod. Upon relocation of the temporary medical gas facilities to the Main Hospital site, a walkway will be aligned along the southern edge of the courtyard that terminates an overlook with a view to Lake Michigan.

The two other areas are private gardens that can only be accessed from the building's interior. Tucked into the southeast corner of the site, the healing garden will serve as an extension of the healing and therapeutic environment with the use of sensory materials. At the outer edge of the healing garden, a plaza with seating is proposed so that outdoor gatherings and special events can occur.

The sitting garden, on the northeast corner of the site, provides additional garden space for patients, staff and visitors. The northern portion of this open space will be permanent, while the area closest to the building is being reserved for potential future expansion. The existing wrought iron fence will be removed, refurbished and reinstalled with a combination of masonry piers and the southern most portion is being studied as a solid brick wall and/or precast concrete for added privacy. The existing street trees along Terrace Avenue will be preserved.

In ground luminaries and up lights will be used in the arrival court and lighting bollards, light poles and lights mounted on top of walls will be used in the healing and sitting courtyards.

On October 31, 2005, a public hearing was held and at that time there was no opposition to the proposed amendment. Since the proposed planned development is consistent with surrounding uses, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on October 31, 2005 recommended approval of this zoning change conditioned on: 1. Working with staff on final building elevations along Terrace Avenue and Lake Drive.

Sincerely,

Rocky Marcoux  
Executive Secretary  
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. D'Amato