



<b>TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM</b>
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TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Lacey G. Simpson, Acting City Manager

DATE: August 25, 2022

RE: **Authorizing a Letter of Support for the PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Institutional Master Plan Amendment – PeaceHealth**

Per the attached email correspondence, PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center Chief Administrative Officer Dori Stevens has requested a letter of support from the City for PeaceHealth's amendment of the 2006 Institutional Master Plan for the St. Joseph Medical Center. The letter of support would be addressed to the City of Bellingham Planning Commission and would endorse PeaceHealth's plans to expand the Emergency Department, nursing units and Childbirth Center at the St. Joseph campus. Ms. Steven's request and a sample letter are attached for City Council review and consideration.

Staff is supportive of this request and recommends City Council approval.

A motion has been prepared for City Council consideration.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the motion approving the submission of a letter to the City of Bellingham Planning Commission in support of PeaceHealth's amendment of the 2006 Institutional Master Plan for the St. Joseph Medical Center as to be written by staff and/or as directed by the City Council.

**Recommended Motion:** I move the City Council approve the submission of a letter to the City of Bellingham Planning Commission in support of PeaceHealth's amendment of the 2006 Institutional Master Plan for the St. Joseph Medical Center as to be written by staff and/or as directed by the City Council.

## Lacey Simpson

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**From:** Stevens, Dori M <DStevens1@peacehealth.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 3:46 PM  
**To:** Lacey Simpson  
**Cc:** Stevens, Dori M  
**Subject:** FW: IMPORTANT: Request to reach out to community stakeholders  
**Attachments:** IMP Support Letter \_ BHAM CofC.docx

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Hi Lacey, I am working with the Northwest Region to line up letters of support for the St. Joes' campus IMP amendment. PeaceHealth St. Joseph is poised to begin a development project on its main campus in Bellingham to increase access to healthcare services to the community and region, and I **respectfully request your consideration of a letter of support to the City of Bellingham Planning Commission.**

The project essentially involves building a six-level pavilion on the campus that will include expanding the Emergency Department, nursing units and the Childbirth Center. The current plan calls for adding up to 112 patient beds – much needed space given a consistent inpatient capacity at close to 90% every day. Finally, the pavilion includes a helipad on the roof. This move from the helipad's current location on the ground behind the hospital will allow the rapid transfer of critically ill patients from the field to a helicopter to the OR in a matter of minutes, eliminating the more time-intensive transfer to ground transportation from the helipad that is required now.

St Joes is our largest sister hospital in the region. We transfer out over 200 patient a year who need a higher level of care. Many of these patient are flown to St Joes.

St Joes is in the process of enlarging their campus, they are growing out of space for the needs of all of our collective patients. It does benefit the population of Ketchikan to have a larger footprint at St Joes so that we have beds to send our patient to.

My ask is that we have key people from the city of Ketchikan such as yourself support this effort in Bellingham. To simplify my request, I've attached a letter that you can choose to put on City letterhead, sign, scan and return via email to Bev Mayhew ([bmayhew@peacehealth.org](mailto:bmayhew@peacehealth.org)) . Alternatively, you can write a personalized letter and send the same way to Bev. **Either would be greatly appreciated by Sept. 15, 2022.**

And don't hesitate to reach out to me if I can answer any questions.

Thank you so much 😊

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City of Bellingham Leadership,

As the Interim City Manager of Ketchikan, I represent a city whose employees and citizens depend on the comprehensive healthcare services provided by the PeaceHealth St. Joseph's Medical Center main campus in Bellingham. PeaceHealth St. Joseph has a deep history of promoting the health of our communities, not only in Bellingham and Whatcom County but also extending to Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties and southeast Alaska, for which it serves as the region's only Level 2 Trauma Center. This fall, PeaceHealth St. Joseph will be seeking approval from the City of Bellingham of their campus master plan and expansion proposal.

**I strongly endorse PeaceHealth's recent application under review with the City of Bellingham to amend the 2006 Institutional Master Plan (IMP).**

- The phased plan for PeaceHealth St. Joseph's future development described in the IMP Amendment is essential for meeting the region's projected healthcare needs well into the future.
- The IMP Amendment responds to increasing demands for acute hospital services and patient procedures because of continued population growth in the medical center's service area.
- The plan better aligns with current healthcare trends, including a growing desire for single-patient rooms, accounts for higher capacity needs highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a move to more outpatient surgery. This is accomplished through a strategic mix of building expansion, remodel of existing buildings, and new construction.

**I actively support prioritizing the proposed West Pavilion and rooftop helipad in the first phase of development under the IMP Amendment.**

- The first phase of new development would add up to 112 beds for patient care, expand the emergency department and create a new, state-of-the-art childbirth center. The near-term benefits to our region would be utilized by generations to come.
- The rooftop helipad proposed with the West Pavilion is a critical element for expediting care of patients who come to the hospital because of emergency or life-threatening events.
  - The rooftop helipad would dramatically reduce patient transfer times by providing a direct path to the emergency department from the rooftop, while also freeing up emergency medical technicians and ambulances to respond to other community calls.

I look forward to seeing the IMP Amendment progress through the City's review and approval process, and I am eager to realize the substantial benefits of the proposed IMP Amendment improvements both in the immediate term and over the next 20 years.

Sincerely,

Lacey Simpson,  
Interim City Manager, the City of  
Ketchikan Alaska