541 N Fairbanks Ct, Suite 110
Chicago, Illinois 60611

September 16, 2026

Alderman Gilbert Villegas, Chairmain
Committee on Zoning, Landmarks, and Building Standards

Laura Flores, Chairwoman
Chicago Plan Commission

Dear Alderman Villegas and Ms. Flores,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents' (SOAR) thoughts and recommendations regarding the new tower proposed by Northwestern Medicine. SOAR has met several times with Northwestern Medicine to review the plans for the new Tower and has co- hosted two public community meetings.

SOAR SUPPORT
SOAR strongly supports the proposed new tower and believes it will enhance healthcare opportunities for Streeterville and all of Chicagoland. The new proposed tower will expand capabilities resulting in the hospital's ability to better serve more patients as the demand increases. However, as with any new development of this magnitude in our neighborhood, we have several concerns. Throughout the public review process, we have heard from members of the community that Traffic is a major concern. Traffic around the hospital and surrounding institutions impacts the majority of central and south Streeterville. We strongly request traffic aids be positioned beginning now with the demolition and construction phases and that they become a permanent addition throughout the medical campus.

TRAFFIC
The worst congestion occurs from Chicago Avenue to Ohio Street, Michigan Avenue to Inner Lake Shore Drive during peak hours. We have reviewed the Hospital's Traffic Study and we concur that the hospital employee's vehicle trips have reduced over the years; patients and visitors to the medical campus have increased. This will only increase with the new hospital. We respectfully request that CDOT meet on a regular basis with representatives of the medical institutions, the Aldermen and SOAR to resolve these issues tin a timely manner throughout the demolition and construction phases. It is essential to have traffic aids in peak areas through OEMC during the demolition and construction phases for the safety and well-being of hospital workers, patients and residents as well as visitors to the area. The aids need to be reinstated and become a permanent addition to the medical campus. This area did have traffic aids during the construction of Lurie Children's Hospital. Again, they need to be reinstated. The CDOT needs to review the current parking on both sides of Erie, east of Michigan Avenue. While it is convenient parking; these spaces contribute to the congestion and impedes emergency vehicles attempting to get to the ER entrance on Erie. The elimination of some or all of these spaces needs to be considered. SOAR believes that it is in the best interest of the City, Hospital, and indeed the community that the traffic and transportation issue be addressed head on at this point in time. When Northwestern Medicine decides to proceed with the development of the eastern remainder of the site; there will be an even larger traffic volume and greater stress on the surrounding streets. The additional development will likely result in more pressure on McClurg, which is already a bottleneck just east and south of the site. Consideration must be addressed at this point in the planning process.

ENFORCEMENT OF TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS
There needs to be an enforcement system for double parkers, Uber/Lyft drop off and pick up, bus idling locations, bus rerouting as well as dump truck routes around the demolition/construction site. Strict protocols need to be issues and enforced. We also recommend that the City's Department of Transportation revisit the Hospital's requests to create pedestrian drop-off areas around the medical campus. The current lack of appropriate drop-off lanes for patients contribute to multiple bottlenecks, which impact multiple streets.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
SOAR has reviewed the demolition and construction plans, and we are most concerned about pedestrian safety around the site. The sidewalk closures have created crowded areas for people to walk. Installation of a covered pedestrian walkway on Huron and Erie would greatly improve pedestrian safety. The area welcomes many visitors with disabilities, and every effort must be made to improve the safety of these individuals. All of the handicap parking spaces have been removed from the south side of Huron, adjacent to the construction site. Replacing those spaces closer to Feinberg and Galter would add to pedestrian safety and provide convenient parking for the patients visiting the many clinics in the area. Lighting at night is important for public safety in the area. It appears that some streetlights have been removed or disengaged. Lighting needs to be attached to the construction fencing and/or around the site. Also, care must be taken so that lights added to the site and/or the tower crane do not impact the residents of 680 Lake Shore Drive or any of the adjacent buildings.

ON GOING COMMUNICATION
During demolition and construction, SOAR would like to receive updates every two weeks that SOAR can share with the community. We are aware that Northwestern Medicine will have a website but those are often difficult for the layman to navigate.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS
While we acknowledge and appreciate the prospect of an additional world class facility in the neighborhood; we also know the impact that such an addition will bring to Streeterville. Working together with our Alderman we would like to identify and suggest some neighborhood improvements that would benefit the community of residents, workers and visitors to the area. We would envision more green spaces in the vicinity for the long term. In addition, we understand that the construction has necessitated the loss of so many trees, but we would like to see the replacement with new trees of significant caliper at the time of planting. We hope that the community benefits will be significant and visible to all and that the public can enjoy community health education, recreation, and on-going well-being. There are several ideas that we will look forward to exploring with the Hospital and Alderman.

Finally, we strongly recommend that a quarterly community meeting and/or with SOAR be initiated to continue cooperation and improvement to this public private partnership.

Again, we sincerely thank you for the opportunity to present our recommendations as SOAR strongly supports Northwestern Medicine's very important and significant project to the future of health care and we look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Deborah Gershbein,
President

cc: Alderman Brian Hopkins
SOAR Board of Directors