

Just the Facts

NEW REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Each week, “Just the Facts” provides information about a key aspect of the new regional medical center being built by Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS). It is designed to keep our medical staff, employees and volunteers updated and to share with family, friends and neighbors so we keep our community informed about how we’re transforming healthcare in our region.



TOPIC FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2019:

After last week’s Common Council meeting I’ve been getting a lot of questions about why people oppose the new regional medical center in Downtown Utica. What are the opponents’ concerns?

This is a great question and in this edition of “Just the Facts,” we’ll share both the opponents’ viewpoints on issues and the response of MVHS and our partners.

1) *The hospital should be built at the St. Luke’s Campus.*

MVHS Response: On August 20, 2015, the MVHS Board of Directors **unanimously** approved the downtown location. The decision to build a new MVHS Regional Medical Center in downtown Utica was made nearly four years ago after a thorough review of potential locations. Since that decision, significant time, money and resources have been invested into the design of the new regional medical center in Downtown Utica. **The St. Luke’s Campus is no longer an option.**

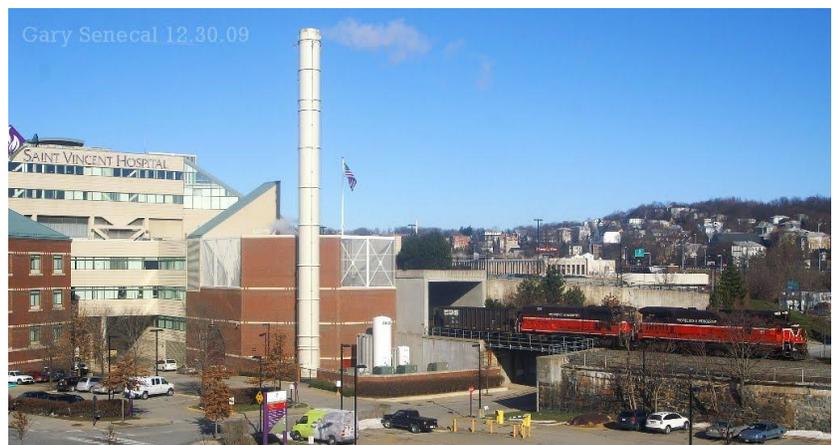
2) *MVHS will cut jobs when it moves to the regional medical center in Downtown Utica.*

MVHS Response: We are working to ensure that our employees maintain their jobs through a comprehensive process of planning between now and when the new medical center opens. The new medical center will be the most successful if it’s staffed by qualified, experienced, dedicated employees and that’s our goal. It is important to recognize that there will be many jobs in healthcare in this region, from the medical center to the outpatient centers, physician practices, College of Nursing, residency programs and on and on. The new medical center will result in many new healthcare jobs being developed in this region. As for the medical center itself, a specific staffing plan is presently under development and will be shared with staff when completed. Right now we have many, many job openings and believe that will continue to be the case. There are more jobs than staff. In the event that an existing job will not be available in the new medical center, we will help to find another position for that person within MVHS.

3) *The downtown site for the medical center is in a dangerous location – it’s a high-crime area and it’s in the railroad “red zone.”*

MVHS Response: It’s been very disconcerting that opponents talk about a high crime rate in the area where the new hospital will be located while simultaneously promoting it as a wonderful neighborhood – it’s hard to tell which perspective they believe. The fact is that there’s a relatively low crime rate as it relates to violent crime.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, a “red zone” for a railroad is defined as within four feet from the outside of the rail on each side of the track, and that relates to the safety of workers – it has nothing to do with businesses or buildings located near railroad tracks. In fact, as this picture shows, in Worcester, MA, the train runs through a tunnel adjacent to the hospital (Saint Vincent Hospital).



4) *There is no other city in America that is building a new hospital in a downtown location.*

MVHS Response: That's simply not true and, in fact, in many parts of the country, the building or expanding of a hospital has helped to revitalize downtown areas. Here's more about Saint Vincent Hospital in downtown Worcester, MA: A November 9, 2018, article in the Worcester Telegram stated, "Medicine has been key to Worcester's revitalization in the new millennium. The East Central Urban Renewal Project was renamed the Medical City project and resulted in the relocation of St. Vincent Hospital from high on Vernon Hill to a downtown site just a few blocks away in 2000."