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April 2, 2014

Peter M. Grollman, Vice President
Government Affairs, Community Relations, and Advocacy
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
34th Street and Civic Center Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Mr. Grollman:

RE: Proposed Development Project for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 700 Schuylkill Avenue

On April 1, 2014, the Civic Design Review (CDR) Committee reviewed the site design of a major new development proposed by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) for 700 Schuylkill Avenue. Phase I of this project is a 563,000 square foot administrative and research/dry laboratory building, with a parking podium containing 512 spaces. The CDR committee voiced several concerns with the proposal as presented, and requested the CHOP development team to return to a subsequent CDR meeting to address these issues. On behalf of the CDR Committee, these concerns are summarized below.

The Civic Design Review Committee stated three overarching concerns with the proposal:

- **City and Neighborhood Connections.** The proposal should create clearer and stronger connections to the urban fabric of adjacent neighborhoods.
- **River Connections.** The proposal should create stronger connections and access to the Schuylkill Riverfront for pedestrians, including local residents.
- **Less Automobile-Centric Design.** The proposal should be less automobile-centric, and the accommodation of traffic and parking should have less of a role in determining the form and layout of the proposal.

Specifically, the Civic Design Review Committee requested that the CHOP development team:

- Consult with the City's Streets Department to explore alternatives to minimize the number of curbs cuts proposed for the South Street Bridge.

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- Commit to the connection to the proposed Schuylkill River Trail extension from the surrounding neighborhood via a pedestrian bridge crossing the CSX railroad tracks, and consider other public amenities advanced by the community.

- Strengthen the proposed development's interface with adjacent neighborhoods through the addition of commercial uses, particularly where the site meets the South Street Bridge.

- Consider "activating" the garage podium fronting Schuylkill Avenue with commercial or community uses.

- Seek to minimize the height of the raised plaza between Schuylkill Avenue and the river wherever feasible.

- Address the problem of speeding automobiles along Schuylkill Avenue by using traffic calming measures south of Bainbridge Street.

- Better define the (interim) use and design treatment of the footprint of the proposed Phase II tower with a more detailed site plan, and provide a rendering of the proposal from the South Street Bridge.

- Explore the feasibility of other transportation alternatives from the current CHOP complex as way to reduce parking demand and traffic influx to the Schuylkill Avenue site.

In addition, the CDR Committee also requested that the following PCPC staff assessment of the proposed site plan be noted and considered further:

- The terraced levels of the parking deck create very positive public access from the South Street Bridge, and provide urban amenities in the form of public plazas and esplanades. The axial connection through the site along the line of Bainbridge Street to the proposed pedestrian bridge to the Schuylkill River Trail extension is highly commendable.

- Provide more information about the appearance of the parking podium elevation facing the Schuylkill River, perhaps through a "greening" treatment or a higher degree of architectural articulation.

- Consult with the Streets Department to resolve potential conflicts between curb cuts, curb bump outs, and proposed angled parking at the intersection of Bainbridge Street and Schuylkill Avenue.

- Better define pedestrian crossings through the vehicular drop-off circle fronting on Schuylkill Avenue.

- Make the ground-level Schuylkill Avenue entry to the Phase I tower more pronounced and legible.

- Activate the public plaza facing the South Street Bridge by considering additional commercial uses on the same level as the plaza.

- Articulate accessibility and proposed security measures for all public spaces on the site, including evening and weekend hours of operation.

The Committee requests that you address these issues at a subsequent Civic Design Review meeting. We also encourage you to work with PCPC staff as you address the Committee findings, and share the results of the full range of your explorations as they become available.

Sincerely,

Gary J. Jastrzab
Executive Director

cc: Nancy Rogo Trainer, CDR Committee Chair
Dan Garofalo, CDR Committee Vice-Chair
Christopher Stromberg, SOSNA
Jim Campbell, SSWBA
Steven Cobb, Hon. Kenyatta Johnson, 2nd City Council District
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Donald Clinton, Cooper, Robertson and Partners
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